.. At ..

Mount Desert

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Fairfax

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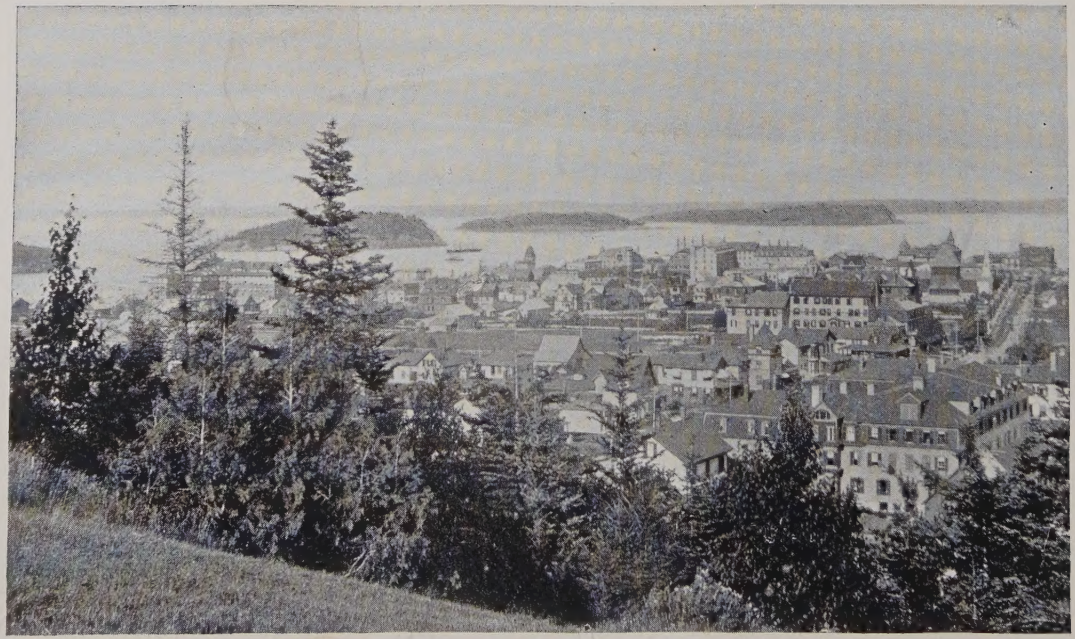

BAR HARBOR, FROM THIRLSTANE.

AT MOUNT DESERT:

A SUMMER'S SOWING

BY

MILDRED FAIRFAX

Author of "In the Vultures' Nest; or, Huguenots at the Court of France in 1572," etc.

"Is it Christ's light is too divine,
We dare not hope like him to shine?
But see, around his dazzling shrine
Earth's gems the fire of heaven hath caught;
Martyrs and saints — each glorious day
Dawning in order on our way —
Remind us, how our darksome clay
May keep th' eternal warmth
That our Redeemer brought."

BOSTON

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CHICAGO

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Enscribed

TO MY TWO COUSINS H. E. S. AND G. L. S.

AND TO THE DEAR MEMORY

OF

L. H. AND W. R. VON W.

"Once more I stand upon the fir-crowned highland,
Where fragrance lingers in the ambient air—
Watching the white surf leap on cliff and island,
Watching the white gulls swoop to rocks laid bare,
Counting the sails that fleck the sparkling ocean,
Hearing all nature stir in rhythmic motion."

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AT MOUNT DESERT:

A SUMMER'S SOWING.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE WAY TO MOUNT DESERT.

MISS PATTY CONWAY did not like addressing strangers; but the refined loveliness of the girl of twenty, graceful, gray-eyed, and sunny-haired, and the evident loneliness of her position, were irresistibly attractive to the sight and sympathy of the old lady. From time to time a tall brother came and spoke to her, then carelessly wandered away to a wild-looking group of fashionable young men who were lounging on the steamer's side smoking and laughing. They bore painful marks of dissipation, and the young girl watched them anxiously, when she was not wistfully studying the shore of Maine. Bound for Mount Desert, the deck of the steamer was thronged with passengers comfortably established with shawls, books, and lunch baskets, to whom the white caps on Penobscot Bay afforded pleasure, not discomfort. Miss Conway's maid sat primly by her side, holding her mistress' wrap and traveling bag.

The coast line of Maine abounds in beauty and variety. Cape and bay and headland charm the eye; islands lie along the picturesque shore where caves

resound with the booming of mighty waves reeling in with deafening roar; great cliffs rise savage in grandeur and unassailable in might; while in loveliest contrast a stretch of sparkling sand fringing a green meadow lies just beyond. Under the summer sky how radiant was the scene to one who loved nature as did Miss Conway!

The steamer, crossing Penobscot Bay, moved on to Deer Island, and then, ever on and on, in and out of the granite ledges of islands green with spruce and fir. Passing York Narrows, with Black Island looming in the north and the beacon on Bass Harbor Head standing as her sentinel, the first entrancing glimpse of Mount Desert was revealed to Hester Wilmerding. Her heart throbbed quickly; her eyes darkened with excitement.

Miss Patty read the meaning of the lovely face in a moment, and rising approached the young girl.

"May I speak to you, my dear?" asked the kind old voice.

Hester at once acknowledged the greeting by leaving her seat and turning courteously to the lady.

The bright face and charming smile touched Miss Patty, who believed in "the leadings of Providence," and that opportunities for cheering or helping another were their indications.

"I saw from your face you were enjoying the scenery and my heart warmed to you, my dear. I have been to Mount Desert many, many summers. If you will permit me, I shall be glad to show you what I most delight in there."

"How very, very kind!" responded Hester eagerly. "It is our first visit. Basil insisted on our coming, and I was so rejoiced. If only"— She paused, her eyes wandering to the gay, reckless group, of which her brother evidently was the center.

The steamer was drawing ever nearer her destination, the full chain of the Mount Desert mountains unfolding to their gaze.

"They greet me as dear old friends," said Miss Conway in her sweet, blithe voice. "There is Western Mountain and Beach Mountain covered still with forest; then Dog Mountain and Robinson's. Do you see the vast, irregular mass of Sargent with its three peaks? The Little Twin nestles by it in the hollow on the southeast. Then comes Pemetic; and last, the long slopes of beautiful Green Mountain, with the Summit House on its top, and the ridge of Newport just seen against the sky beyond."

Hester listened intently. How wondrously beautiful it was — such a sky of azure, such ceaseless light and shadow on the mountains!

Miss Conway continued indicating various points that her loving eye recognized immediately — sheltered cove and sunny nook; steep precipice and green meadow; a wild mountain gorge and calm mountain lake. Endless was the contrast and variety girdled by the summer sea.

The steamer paused at Southwest Harbor, the first landing made at Mount Desert, where many of the passengers left the boat, preferring the tranquil village to the gay crowd at Bar Harbor.

"It might be better for us to remain in this peaceful spot," said Hester. "I begged Basil to think of it, but he was sure we would much prefer the life and movement farther on. Shall we?" she asked, turning to Miss Conway with the confiding glance of a child seeking guidance.

"One can be very quiet even at Bar Harbor," returned the old lady, smiling, "and very much the reverse. Your brother is doubtless hoping to have his friends around him there."

A look of anxiety clouded Hester's sweet eyes.

"Basil is five years older than I, but I often feel as if I were his mother."

Miss Patty impulsively extended her hand. "I know all concerning your cares, my dear child. I had a brother who cost me many perplexing hours and sleepless nights."

Tears dimmed the old lady's eyes, and for a moment Hester could see nothing of sea or sky. But her heart was comforted. She had found a friend, she was sure, one who could help her and lighten troubles often overwhelming.

Miss Conway recovered her composure by an effort, and again interested her companion in the passing scene.

"So far as a fine view is concerned, Bar Harbor's position was a mistaken choice. The mountains there are not at their best, nor the Atlantic. It was the remoteness of the spot, I presume, that led to its selection; but what varied and glorious excursions are at your command!"

BAR HARBOR.

Southwest Harbor was receding and Somes' Sound, with its spacious haven and lofty cliffs penetrating the island for seven miles, was caught in a momentary glimpse. Before Southwest Harbor had melted into haze, Miss Patty narrated the story of Mount Desert's noble Jesuit colony at Fernald's Point, sent forth from France to seek and Christianize the Indians in the reign of Louis XIII; the cruel plunder of their mission station and the murder, or captivity, by the English pirate, of their priests.

On and on glided the steamer, passing Otter Cliffs, dark Thunder Cave, the shining sands of Newport Beach, and the magnificent overhanging precipice of Great Head — a natural fortress, against which the mighty force of the Atlantic casts itself in vain.

Hester Wilmerding, fascinated by the spell of this marvelous scene, stood silently leaning against the steamer's rail, beautiful Frenchman's Bay opening before her.

Miss Patty pointed out Anemone Cave, gigantic Schooner-head Rock, and Spouting Horn — a cleft at the summit of the Head, Balance Rock, and Newport Mountain towering skyward, where Miss Conway told her she could climb to the top through fragrant woods of fir and pine and emerge to look down, down, down two thousand feet into the surging sea.

They were entering Bar Harbor now, gay with Indian canoes, yachts, fishing smacks and boats. An eager crowd from the hotels and cottages gathered on the wharf to welcome friends or see the landing of the strangers.

CHAPTER II.

BASIL'S RESOLVE.

BY an agreeable chance, the rooms of Miss Conway and those Basil Wilmerding had engaged were in the same hotel. Hester needed only this arrangement for perfect content. She already clung to Miss Patty as a haven of refuge and felt as if she had known her always.

The long veranda was crowded at the moment of their arrival. It is one of the customs at Bar Harbor, after each meal, to gather there discussing the weather, deciding routes and excursions, exchanging books, and comparing fancywork. Hester wondered how one could waste time embroidering linen or satin when the ocean and mountains were calling, calling to those who should have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to feel their majesty and beauty. She soon found that, with rare exceptions, only a few days were needed in that magic realm to displace the needle by absorption in yachting parties, buckboard parties, picnics, tennis, long walks, mountain climbing, and expeditions along the beautiful shore in birch-bark canoes with a deerskin to sit on and a veritable Indian in the stern.

Hester's room was within a few doors of Miss Conway's. She was debating whether she might seek her and why Basil had not yet appeared, when her brother

with a quick knock turned the handle of her door and entered. A great change had passed over him. Still excited, but with a calmness of manner new to Hester, he said: —

"I have something to reveal — a profound secret, remember! I know I can trust you. You often inquired why I insisted on visiting Bar Harbor. Our grandfather is here in his own cottage, very ill. Dr. Duncan thought it just to give me a chance and wrote me."

Hester was mute, but her face had become pallid. Unconsciously she clasped her hands while listening to Basil.

"Say something — do!" cried her brother.

"'A chance'? What do you mean?"

"An opportunity to alter grandfather's unwarrantable resolution. All his immense property is willed away from us because he would not forgive the marriage of his only daughter. I have debts" —

"Yes, I know," murmured Hester, her eyes sad and her lips trembling.

"You know?" retorted Basil disdainfully. "You do not know a tithe of what I owe! If Grandfather Harcourt carries his revenge to the grave, we will be almost penniless. Do you know what that means?"

"I can work," said Hester bravely.

"Work! Now remember to conceal that we are related to Mr. Harcourt. I am to appear at Ullescliffe Cottage as Dr. Duncan's second nurse and do what I can for and with grandfather."

"O Basil, you can do nothing!"

"I can do a great deal — only give me a chance."

"But he has not noticed us for years; he refused to see me when I last called, sending the message, 'I have no grandchildren.'"

"O Hester, Hester! despair, determination will suggest some expedient that will win him. He must not, must not will his estate away from us! He shall not — shall not!" Basil's clenched hand was dashed violently on the back of a chair and his face became white and determined. "Only give me your good wishes, Hester. All depends on the next few weeks, days, or even hours. I have so changed, and it is so long since grandfather has seen me, that I shall enter his presence a stranger free to win his interest, perhaps affection. Good-by!"

"You are coming back to-night?"

"No. I shall remain at Ullescliffe. The head nurse is ill. What good fortune for me! I accept his removal as an auspicious omen. You shall possess everything you wish — some day."

Basil stooped and carelessly kissed his sister's pale cheek. She clasped his arm with both hands.

"O Basil, you terrify me!"

"Foolish child! Trust me, dear; your just rights shall be respected."

A brief, mirthless laugh, and Basil Wilmerding unclasped his sister's hands and quickly closed the door behind him.

Hester stood still, her young face smitten by pain and anxiety, her heart throbbing violently.

"Oh, what would our mother think? what would

mother think?" she was asking herself. She had no power to change Basil's wild, desperate whim. A prayer fled heavenward — a cry for help and guidance. Poor child! she was so alone and her heart was yearning so pitifully for the sweet mother, so tender and wise, who had always known what was right, and possessed the courage to do only the right when it was shown her. Hester possessed her brave, unflinching spirit — one of the most precious inheritances a child can receive from a mother.

Miss Conway's voice was asking admittance. Hester hastened to receive the old lady, who, equipped for a drive, sought her companionship.

"How very kind! I will join you in one moment."

The well-built, commodious streets of Bar Harbor, containing finely appointed hotels and business blocks, were not interesting to Hester. She scarcely glanced at these indications of a prosperous town and the crowds of tourists walking or driving. Under the bluest of skies, clear as crystal, she longed to be near the sea.

On sped Miss Conway's comfortable buckboard, guided by a driver who allowed his horses, Mount Desert fashion, to rush uphill as fast as down, and who indicated and named, in a breathless manner, every new point of interest since Miss Conway's last summer.

One spacious, picturesque cottage possessed for Hester a painful interest.

"Yonder, at Ullescliffe, lies a sick gentleman," said

the driver. "His riches do not give him ease. They say he could pay gold for every moment's freedom from pain; but the doctors can't save him."

"Who is he?" asked Miss Conway, while Hester turned toward the sea, shrinking from the name.

"A Mr. Harcourt, madam. He is a fine and pleasant gentleman. I drove him many an hour when he first came to Bar Harbor, and he always paid me double. Heigho!" and honest William Madden heaved a sigh as he recalled Mr. Harcourt's past liberality.

Hester remembered the refined face and aquiline features of her grandfather, his air of "grand seigneur," his lavish expenditure, of which she had so often heard. Was he generous to all save his nearest kin? After all, might it not be right for Basil to seek to win him to what was only just toward his grandchildren? Momentarily relieved from a burden of doubt, Hester became intensely aware of the wondrous blending of rare and lovely color on mountain, sea, and shore.

Descending from the buckboard, she stood by Miss Conway on a battlement of noble, lofty cliffs and gazed out on the lonely splendor of blue sea and azure sky. Scarcely a sail was visible. The few ships, gliding away, away, and fading on the eye, possessed a charm for Hester. Below, the blue-green sea was surging in seething masses of snow, thundering madly against the cliffs, breaking over the rocks — a wild, ceaseless tumult, inexpressibly exhilarating. Foam-white gulls were floating tranquilly above the clashing din. Sweet

was the cool, briny air through which their strong wings bore them in powerful and graceful flight to remote nests on the rocky, wind-swept heights.

Hester, who delighted in Mrs. Browning's exquisite little poem and was seeing that day her first silvery gull, was entranced, and did not hear Miss Patty's comments on the tourists who, arrayed in broad-brimmed hats and picturesque costumes of blue or dark-red flannel, were driving up or descending the cliffs; the ladies, with slender feet encased in stout walking shoes, carrying sun umbrellas and attended by brothers, sons, or husbands, were a large and merry group.

Many of the summer residents — owners of the costly "cottages" — had also driven to those breezy heights that afternoon, and at once recognized and approached Miss Conway with many demonstrations of delight. Hester, drawn away from the gulls and their beloved sea to be introduced to these friends, tried to command her attention and not wish herself back on the edge of the great, dark cliff.

"I saw you were watching the gulls," said Jack Bolton, a youth of fifteen or sixteen, who, with his mother, sister, and cousin, had gathered around Miss Conway. "I hate all that talking, don't you? I did not wish to drive up here, but to go off in my boat to Schooner Head, or over to Bar Island, where the Canoe Club have a fine house and are preparing for their annual parade."

"But the view from these cliffs is so beautiful," responded Hester.

"I like it better lower down."

"From your own boat, you mean?" returned Hester, smiling.

"Yes. And this is your first visit to Mount Desert, I heard you say. You have an endless variety to enjoy; I am not speaking of the people, mind you. You will not find them so charming as the gulls you are longing to watch this moment."

Hester laughed. "Am I so rude as to give you an impression that I am not enjoying your conversation?"

"Of course you care nothing for me; but I was attracted to you because I saw you were not one of the silly girls who only come to Bar Harbor to show their gowns. You will like my cousin Nelly Armitage; she's not one of the 'girls of the day' either."

Hester smiled.

"You love this wild, salt air and roaring sea and the snowy gulls, don't you? So do I. I can't like society ways, with no truth or heart in anything," continued Jack.

"Perhaps" —

"Perhaps I'll show the island to you, you mean? That I'd like to do; and I will. We live here in the summer. Miss Conway will be bringing you to Bayview — our cottage. There! that's another bit of pride and affectation. It's no 'cottage,' but a very handsome villa, as all the 'cottages' are on Mount Desert."

Hester, much amused with this odd, loquacious youth, — she little knew how glum and silent he was usually, — glanced at the fair young cousin whose

hands were laden with fragrant gray-green Mount Desert grasses. She was dividing the bunch and handed it to Hester with a smile.

"For me! Oh, how delicious!"

"You 'll find all Nelly gives is sweet," quoth Jack. "I must bring you golden-rod; it 's coming into bloom. Good-by, Miss Wilmerding; I 'll not forget to show you Mount Desert from my canoe;" and Jack Bolton assisted Miss Conway and herself into their buckboard, the former promising Mrs. Bolton soon to bring her young friend over to Bayview.

Hester was very lonely and restless that evening, though Miss Patty was all attention. She retired to her room deeply grateful for so much unexpected kindness, to find a pile of new books on her table, placed there by the considerate old lady; but in her present mood even they could not divert her troubled thoughts.

Under a full moon, Bar Harbor was a town of silver. Hester longed to be again on the cliffs that she might see the radiant Atlantic, where ships were coming and going, their sails snowy in the moonbeams. Were the beautiful gulls still floating, or had they folded their wings for slumber? How the perfume of the Mount Desert grasses filled her chamber! What an enchanting island, if only — And then her anxious thoughts fled to Ullescliffe Cottage where she saw the delicate features of a weary face and Basil watching. What was he saying? what doing? Was he a tender nurse? Poor grandfather — her mother's

father! Hester's heart melted over him. She longed to soothe his sufferings. He had vast wealth; yet how poor he was! Love did not kneel by his pillow or clasp his hand or sympathize in a single emotion. Did he know of the divine love? He could not have so closed his heart to his only daughter and her children if that celestial tenderness had softened an inflexible nature. In a simple trust she committed her two nearest of kin to the enfolding care of an unseen protection. From heaven would fall a silvery dew of influence to touch and heal, when she was powerless to reach or minister.

While musing thus, and somewhat comforted, the lovely face of a lady in deep mourning rose unbidden — a friend of Miss Conway, who had interested her from the moment of reaching Bar Harbor. Young as she still was, a desolating sorrow had swept over her, leaving many traces of the storm.

"Madame de Chavigni is a Creole from Louisiana, my dear," Miss Patty had explained later. "I knew her charming grandmother in old New Orleans days before the war. I am so glad to meet Constance here. She has known the extreme of sorrow."

Because of her own experience of anxiety and suffering, Hester's ardent, sensitive heart unclosed its door to this attractive stranger. Falling asleep, she beheld her in a sinking boat on a lonely sea, extending beseeching hands that Hester strove to touch and clasp, but could not reach. Then it was her grandfather, whose blanched face, gazing appealingly, sought her aid. He was dying on a Russian waste of

snow and she was powerless to warm his freezing form. The vision faded as her tears fell over her own pitiful incapacity. Again she was by the shore, a fluttering sea gull in her hands. She could feel its throbbing heart and read the appeal in its stricken, beseeching eyes. "No, my pretty gull, I'll not detain you! You cannot belong to me or any human creature. You belong to the winds and the sea, the spray and the foam, the wild storm and the tranquil, free, and sunlit day." Her hands released the innocent bird, which rapturously drifted off and away, its white wings gleaming against the dazzling azure of the sky.

CHAPTER III.

TIDINGS.

THE Atlantic, a great reflecting mirror, doubled the radiance of the sky. Hester, waking in a flood of sunshine, was thrilled with a hope of good tidings from Basil. There must be a note; he could not leave her with no line to cheer the day.

"You have an appetite, I trust, my dear," said kind Miss Patty, hastening to greet her. "What a morning it is! Such sunlight and such air! Do look at the sky!"

Hester joyously assented, though her eyes and mind were preoccupied, watching each person who entered the dining room. Basil might come, or he might send a note.

Neither Basil nor a note appeared.

"Where is your brother, Hester?"

The sudden question startled the girl. The truth — only the truth — she had always spoken. But how could she utter it now? Was it not right to evade a direct answer?

Miss Conway's face was grave. She thought Basil had passed the night with his wild friends, and his sister was naturally troubled and disinclined to respond.

Regretting she had questioned her, Miss Conway immediately referred again to the loveliness of the morning and suggested a walk or drive.

"Dear Miss Conway," said Hester, turning her sweet, truthful eyes toward her, "I cannot confide in you as I desire; but believe me, Basil has been engaged in a most unselfish occupation."

"Oh, my dear, pardon me!" exclaimed Miss Conway.

"Indeed I have nothing to pardon. You had every reason to believe the contrary, from seeing Basil's companions on the day of our arrival. Besides, almost unconsciously, I revealed some troubled thoughts. Basil has a kind, warm heart. He has gone to be a comfort, I trust, to some one who needs him. Ah!" and Hester half rose.

Jack Bolton, holding a note, stood within the door, asking a question of the head waiter. Then he strode straight to Hester, laying a sealed envelope in her eager hand.

"Good-morning, Miss Conway! good-morning, Miss Wilmerding!"

"Who gave you this note, Mr. Bolton?"

"I'm 'Jack,' if you please."

"Then — Jack, who gave you this note?"

"A boy who sprang from a doctor's carriage. He gazed at this hotel and seemed distracted. I was passing. 'Are you going in?' he asked.

"'Do I look so?'

"'Yes.'

"'Your penetration is at fault.'

"The boy turned the note over and over. 'It is for a Miss Wilmerding,' he said, 'and very important.'

"I took pity on him. It's not my way, as you'll find; but the boy seemed troubled. 'Give me the note: I'll see it's delivered.' He yielded the note, for my visage inspired confidence."

"He did right to trust you!" exclaimed Hester warmly.

Jack slightly bowed. "Now I'll permit you to read your treasure. Miss Conway, are you not coming to our cottage this morning?"

"If Miss Wilmerding will accompany me. In the absence of her brother I cannot permit loneliness."

"Perhaps it is etiquette for my mother, sister, and cousin to call first on you. I'll send them!" and away fled Jack, Hester's smile seeming to incite him to swifter speed.

"Now, my dear, I'll gladly excuse you. I am going to my room: when you are ready, come to me."

Hester, grateful and eager, mutely thanked her friend and hastened away to learn Basil's tidings: —

ULLESCLIFFE COTTAGE.

All doing well — better than I expected. Grandfather has not recognized me and does not appear to dislike my presence. He grumbled at the absence of the head nurse, but when I was introduced by Dr. Duncan as "Fortescue" — my middle name being unknown to him — he accepted my services graciously. He is much changed: emaciated, pale, and silent. But what a picture he is! While he sleeps or meditates, I watch his fine face — so sensitive, intellectual, and kindly. Is he obdurate flint only on one point? a monomaniac? I am all eagerness to apply the opening wedge and mention his nearest kin. I long for an inspiration to reveal the right moment and the right words! I did not sleep last night — there was medicine to give every half hour and a cheery wood fire on a wide hearth to be replenished. His manservant, who seemed quite worn out, I dispatched to bed at

midnight. Grandfather seldom addresses me. He lies passive, but suffers much. Sometimes I think the pain is mental. His face is often stricken by deep anguish. Is conscience, remembrance, torturing him?

Be out in the air as much as possible. Tell Miss Conway I trust you entirely to her. She is an oldtime gentlewoman: I saw that at a glance.

Dear Hester, have a note ready when Dr. Duncan calls. He has some patients in your hotel. He will ask for you. B. F. W.

Hester poured forth her heart on paper. When, an hour later, the doctor sent up his card, her letter was addressed and sealed. In walking attire she entered one of the reception rooms, to be greeted so cordially that her shyness vanished and she was able to speak as to a trusted friend.

"If Basil wins your grandfather, Miss Wilmerding, he is too really noble to retain the old grudge."

"Have you hope?"

"Much hope!"

"How is he this morning?"

"More comfortable."

"He has not recognized Basil?"

"He has given no indication."

"Is there anything I can do to lighten the long, lonely hours?"

"Nothing, I am sorry to say. Mr. Harcourt would not admit you."

"Notwithstanding his indifference, my mother's father is dear to me," responded Hester with a break in her voice.

"We must wait. Let us be hopeful." Then Dr. Duncan, taking Hester's letter, went away, leaving

the young girl cheered and in a mood to enjoy every gracious charm of the day.

Never was view of sky, shore, and sea more exquisite than that Hester enjoyed from Bayview, whither Mrs. Bolton drove her and Miss Conway "to see one of the loveliest nooks of Mount Desert." Each casement and veranda of the picturesque villa was awning-shaded. The spacious rooms opening into each other were charming in an unusual degree, for they had brought from their city home paintings, statuary, tasteful ornaments and furniture, books, a harp and a grand piano. The perfume and glow of flowers were everywhere.

Miss Patty commented vivaciously. "You must commend Jack. He suggested, insisted, and finally sent on just what he pleased. Ah, here he is!"

Jack, who had caught the last sentence, was in a cloudy mood. His morning's urbanity had vanished.

Hester watched him, amused by this new development of look and manner.

"Of all the uncourteous boys who ever existed, you are chief!" exclaimed Meta, when their visitors had departed.

"And after urging us to call at once, Jack!" expostulated his mother. "When the ladies returned with us, you seemed to have quite forgotten your having met them on the cliffs yesterday."

"What comment have you to offer, Nelly?" demanded Jack with not one change of feature.

Nelly smiled and shook her head.

"I am unworthy a comment? or, no language can express your disapproval?"

Nelly refused to respond. Jack shrugged his shoulders. Mrs. Bolton and Meta departed to a reception and then Jack sat down.

"I am waiting, Nelly."

"Waiting?"

"Yes; I desire your opinion."

"On what?"

"My deportment to my mother's guests."

"Why do you care for my opinion?"

"Because I am interesting to myself, if to no other creature."

Nelly gazed wistfully at Jack.

"O Jack!" she said.

"Continue."

"Not while you are in that mood!"

She rose and stood by one of the broad windows opening on the veranda. The translucent water of Frenchman's Bay reflected the azure of the sky. Beyond were the Sullivan Hills, and like a faint cloud in the east lay the peaks of Schoodic Mountain. Delicious was the air, warm the sunshine, as Nelly stepped out on the grassy bluff opposite the green shore of the mainland and the islands that rested birdlike on the bay.

"There!" exclaimed Jack, who had followed her. "Won't there be a breeze when Meta knows I forgot to mail her letters!" drawing five from his pocket and regarding them. "Two, I perceive, are in your handwriting, Nelly."

The girl's cheeks flushed; she had so wished those letters to leave Bar Harbor by the earliest mail!

"They must await the evening's post. Are they of the least importance?"

The scoffing tone was trying, but Nelly did not retort. She was determined to meet Jack's mood on the principle of the sun, not the wind. Never, in all her life, had she met a lad so utterly unbearable on certain occasions; but so much the more necessary to oppose his cloud with sunlight.

Jack moved on, Nelly just behind him. How tall and strong he was, not lacking in grace! How agreeable and trustworthy! if he only would —

Jack had relapsed into an ungenial silence, tugging away at a mass of tangled strings, scowling as he worked.

"Jack, I think I can untangle that."

"Girls can't do anything helpful or sensible."

"Please let me try! Are they fish lines?"

"The morning air has not blunted your penetration," still tugging at the lines and not looking up.

"I really wish to help you; it will give me pleasure."

Amazed, Jack glanced at his cousin and involuntarily smiled. This radiance utterly changed his face. One rarely saw it unless he had had a fine day's fishing or shooting.

Nelly extended her hand for the lines.

"Nonsense! Did you ever hear of a girl who could untangle a lot of cord — after a boy had once knotted it?"

"I'll be the first then to perform that feat!" answered Nelly brightly.

"How you girls do cling to an idea, when once you adopt it! There — take it!" placing the tangle in Nelly's hand. "For pity's sake don't make more snarls for me to peg at! If you do, mind! I'll be even with you. I don't comprehend your request; but it would be a sheer waste of time to ferret out a girl's whims. And now — I'll take you out in my boat."

"Oh, will you? Don't you wish to wait for Meta and Miss Forbes?"

"I don't wish to see Meta or Miss Forbes again this morning! It was you I invited. But first play to me! Your music has the effect of David's harp on moody, reckless Saul."

The last sentence was murmured so low that Nelly scarcely caught it.

CHAPTER IV.

A COVE ON THE BAY.

JACK strode back to the house to open the melodious grand piano for his cousin. Casting himself in a big chair, he was utterly silent, save when he asked for the repetition of a certain Chopin *prélude*.

"I wish you would play it over and over and over, without a request! Can't you understand that it is like the sunset you watched yesterday? I saw you gaze and gaze — and heard you sigh too — with pleasure," he added under his breath.

The Polish music wakened all that was dreamy and poetic in Jack's nature. Nelly felt this, wondering how deep the stream ran and wishing she possessed the key to this still unknown character. With sudden conviction she struck a chord, exclaiming mentally — "I have found it!" Let the sequel prove if she was correct in her estimate of her cousin's nature.

But a few minutes were needed to reach the little private wharf below the cottage, and away glided Jack's boat bearing him and Nelly over the blue shining water of the bay. They landed in Jack's favorite cove very easily, for it was now half tide. Beaching the boat, they made their way over a low ledge of rock slippery with amber and crimson seaweed. Oh, the delight to Nelly of studying the crystal pools gleaming amidst

it, the home of exquisite purple, emerald, and violet mosses and tiny shellfish enjoying therein their tranquil life! Seated on a rock shaggy and warm with dry seaweed, the two cousins gazed across the blue and sunlit width of Frenchman's Bay. From Jack's pocket came a sketching pad to which he rapidly and skillfully transferred the scene.

"You ought to look from this cove in the autumn, Nelly, on the scarlet of the rock maple and sumach, the gold of the beech and birch, and rich dark green of the firs and pines. The pink feldspar warms the rocks as with a sunset bloom; and the sea in those soft, bright, yet hazy days is mingled purple and blue, slowly breaking in silvery foam over the ledges, or dreamily curling up among the big evergreens along the shore."

Nelly listened spellbound. Was this the Jack of the morning — sullen, unapproachable, imprisoned within his crusty shell? She revealed her appreciation by no word, but her lovely face was radiant as she hailed this unusual mood. It was the real Jack; the one she was determined to know and help into fuller sunlight.

She drew a little book from her pocket.

"Do you sketch too?" asked Jack, immediately interested.

"A very little."

"Do let me see what you have."

"This is not a sketching pad. It is a collection of Christina Rossetti's shorter poems."

Jack gathered some of the brilliant little yellow

shells that abound on the coast of Maine and crushed them in his hand.

"Those poems are serious — religious," he said, having glanced at the index. "I thought only clergymen carried that style of poetry. Don't you take to that fad, Helen!"

It was the first time he had given Nelly her real name.

"By the way, did it ever occur to you that calling me 'Jack' instead of earnest 'John' had a very demoralizing effect on my character? I am sure it made me first cousin to all the wild winds that blow — to the eagles, to the tameless creatures everywhere." Then breaking into laughter he asked: —

"Were you wishing to read your Christina Rossetti in this pretty cove? There is a Nereid's grotto behind us, safe even from the rising tide."

"I can find what I am searching for here," replied Nelly, quite unruffled.

"Your Miss Rossetti's name recalls Christine Nilsson. She sang 'Angels ever bright and fair,' from one of Handel's oratorios. It was the only religious music for which I ever cared. What a voice she had! — a mountain voice; clear as crystal, brilliant as the stars, and sweet as a skylark's!"

"I enjoyed it as you did."

"Did you?" responded Jack, pleased to watch Nelly's blue eyes darkening with repressed enthusiasm, and the tint of the wild-rose bloom on her cheeks.

"Since you appreciated my 'religious poem,' I'll be gracious and listen to yours."

"Life and death are as natural and simple as sunrise and sunset, Jack. Why should you close your mind to their remembrance? Why live in three rooms in your house, when you possess a dozen whose windows are tightly barred and darkened, and in which, though they belong to you, you are still a stranger?"

"In plain English what do you mean?" retorted Jack.

> The windows of my soul I throw
> Wide open to the sun,

quoted Helen.

"The sun is good," was Jack's only response.

> We close our eyes — the flowers bloom on;
> We murmur — but the corn ears fill;
> We choose the shadow, but the sun
> That casts it shines behind us still,

again quoted Helen, her sweet face so peaceful and content that Jack gazed on her wonderingly.

"Are those lines from Christina Rossetti?"

"No; they are Whittier's."

"A promise is a promise. I promised to listen to your poem. Has it any connection with 'windows open to the sun'?"

"To live in its remembrance is to live in sunshine all the day."

"Even for such a Saul as I?"

"It will transform Saul. It is the voice of the divine One speaking to you and me."

"I am listening."

Then Helen repeated Miss Rossetti's poem: —

"I bore with thee long weary days and nights."

An utter stillness succeeded, only broken by the splash of the waves softly breaking on the beach. Jack opened his sketching pad to transfer thereto a ship with spread sails, and a floating gull.

Then he rose. "Come, Helen; it is time to return."

He had become impenetrable. A sailor would have characterized him by saying, "He has put up his dead-lights." Not one syllable did he utter as he rowed up the lovely bay.

Nelly was troubled. Had she driven him further from what she most loved by reading that poem? The tranquil azure sky soothed her anxiety. She yielded to the charm, leaving that Saul-like spirit where alone celestial balm could touch and heal.

"Recite something — like the calm of the day," suddenly said Jack.

The beach undulates softly and opens its hollows to the ripples of the sea. Each ripple comes up foamy at first, then smooths itself, leaves behind it the flocks of its white fleece, going to sleep upon the shore it has kissed. Another approaches, and beyond that another: then a whole troop, striping the blue water with embroidery of silver. The ripples whisper low and you can scarcely hear them under the outcry of the distant billows: but the beach is sweet and smiling, softening its embrace the better to receive and caress those darling wavelets — the little children of the sea.

"Thank you, Helen! That recalls my *prélude*." The clouded brow was serene, a smile curved the lips, the "dead-lights" were down.

CHAPTER V.

BROOK IN THE MEADOW.

BAR HARBOR was crowded with its usual summer multitude: literary men and women, artists, students, public officials seizing a brief rest, distinguished men from every quarter — statesmen, soldiers, diplomats, the members of more than one foreign legation, charming women, girls, and children, and the inevitable fashionable clique that mars every summer's gathering. Hester looked on as at a play, watching the shiftings of the kaleidoscopic scenes, but always mindful of Basil and her grandfather. How deeply she regretted that her brother was seeking to win the favor of the vindictive old man! A haunting fear ever whispered that only evil would result from the means Basil might use in the desperate game he was playing.

In the midst of her anxieties, Jack Bolton, bearing a bunch of golden-rod and purple asters, presented himself.

"I promised to show you Mount Desert, Miss Wilmerding. That cannot be done in one morning, or in two; but we can make a beginning. Shall we have a drive, walk, or row?"

"Oh, a walk, this morning! What beautiful golden sprays and asters you have brought me! It is very early for these flowers."

"Yes; but every season a few come before their time. I'll take you for a short walk over to the mill in the meadow, near Mount Kebo. Rippling there under the shadows is a merry brown brook, and the road runs across fields edged with blackberry vines and wild roses. If you choose, we can go on a little farther and climb Kebo. It is not much of a climb; but you 'll have a fine view of Bar Harbor and the bay and the slope and sweep of the lower hills."

So Jack and Hester, with some sprays of the earliest golden-rod and purple asters in her girdle, bade adieu to kind old Miss Patty, who gazed after the two, smiling in sympathy with their fresh youth and strength.

The air was so delicious, the sky so blue, the grass so dry and warm! They gathered sweet, shining blackberries and lovely wild roses, till the girl and Jack could carry no more; then they sat down by the clear musical little brook to hearken to its song.

"Do you enjoy this as much as the cliffs?"

"It is different, Jack, but as attractive. The grand view of sea and sky thrills: this quiets and charms by its repose."

"You are glad you came to Mount Desert?"

"Very, very glad; and yet — sometimes I wish I had not come. The island is much more wonderful and beautiful than I dreamed it; but another reason" —

"Oh, there 's always an annoying person to spoil everything!" returned Jack, recalling one or two of his own experiences.

"Yes; that 's it."

"I thought so. Mount Desert would always en-

chant you from June to November. Why do men and women, supposed to be superior to all the rest of creation, always mar one's comfort?'

"Men and women are very imperfect beings. Your cousin charmed me."

"Helen is one by herself! She is as perfect as one can be."

"Do you tell her so?"

"No, indeed! If she became self-conscious, she would lose her beauty."

Hester laughed as she listened to this boy leaning against a tree and talking as if he had known her always.

"At my age, there is nothing but chaos. I don't know what I was meant to be, or if I'll ever attain to anything worth being born for! You never felt that," cried Jack.

"Indeed I have!"

"Is n't it detestable?"

"Very."

"Are you at all what you thought you would be?"

"No."

"Better or worse?"

"Worse."

"No one would believe you! How prettily those leaf shadows dance over your white gown! Let me sketch you!"

Out came the pad, and Jack worked away, silent and absorbed.

"That will do! I'll finish it when I reach home. Did you ever read Christina Rossetti's poems?"

"Yes."

"Did you enjoy them?"

"Very much. They made me think."

"That's just it! I wish I had never heard one of them! I can't wrench a certain poem from my mind. It's true, too, I know; that's the strength of it. Come! let me show you the path up old Kebo."

From the Club House floated the strains of an orchestra.

"Oh, how lovely that is!" cried Hester.

"What is music — what does it do to you?"

"It finds all the sad places in my heart, Jack; it forces me painfully to remember what I would most forget; but it also delights, enchants, uplifts."

Jack nodded an assent to each remark.

"Do you feel thus?"

"Yes," he murmured rather than spoke. "Come! we'll never reach the top."

"Oh, but it's lovely — lovely!" exclaimed Hester, gazing down on Bar Harbor, the shining bay and the broken outline of many mountains against the sky. "Look at that clump of birches! What a picture their silvery trunks and delicate foliage make! How those sails gleam!"

"And there are some of your gulls winging their way southward."

"Pretty creatures! I dreamed of one."

"Shall I snare you a gull?"

"Not for the world! I could not make it happy. In my dream it fluttered and panted and suffered."

"But if you wanted it" —

"And if it did not want me!"

"You are noble and you have a tender heart; I like you!" said Jack, regarding Hester as directly and simply as if she had been a silvery birch or an unknown flower.

"And I like you. You are brave and true. Oh, how I wish"— "Basil had been such a boy!" were the words she arrested with a sigh.

"You're unhappy — worried," said Jack sympathetically, feeling as he did one day on picking up a bird with a broken wing. "Can't I help you?"

"No, Jack. I wish you could."

"Helen could."

"There are some troubles discussion does not heal — quite the reverse. Shall we not leave Kebo? I am anxious to receive a letter I know is awaiting me at the hotel."

"What a shame you can't enjoy Mount Desert in peace!"

"Is n't it always so in life? It is the amber marred by the fly."

"You are very young to" —

"Yes, I'm young; but I've borne a heavy heart for a long, long time."

"Have n't you enjoyed your walk?" asked Jack anxiously.

"Exceedingly. I am so grateful to you!"

"No need."

"The morning Miss Patty and I drove over to Bayview" —

"You did not recognize me? I was in one of my black, inclement moods."

"You are too brave a boy to succumb to a mood!"

"Is it a question of bravery?"

"Yes; and of principle."

"So Helen would say."

"We have reached the hotel. Thank you very, very much!"

"I'm coming for you again. It shall be a sail next time."

"I'll remember. Good-by, Jack."

"Good-by, Miss Wilmerding. Here are your roses."

"Thank you."

Hester hurried to her room, happy in spite of much to depress her. Basil's note lay on a table near Jack's golden-rod and purple asters. She placed her wild roses in water and tore open her brother's envelope:

ULLESCLIFFE COTTAGE.

All goes well. I am becoming necessary to grandfather. He informed Dr. Duncan that he did not care for the return of the head nurse; I might secure an assistant immediately, if needed. I have read much to him. He is pleased to say my voice and pronunciation are extremely agreeable.

"Am I your first patient?" he abruptly asked yesterday.

"Yes, sir."

"From what medical college or hospital did you receive a diploma?"

"From none."

"Why did you assume the position of a nurse?"

"To earn money."

"Is the remuneration I give satisfactory?"

"Perfectly."

"It shall be doubled; I do not wish to lose your services."

Then he relapsed into silence and meditation. Suppose he were to fancy me? Sick men indulge in unaccountable whims. Ignoring his past will, he would then leave me the bulk of his estate. How

my head whirls at that idea! Oh, I need help so much: I am in such straits! My own fault? Verily. And I have burdened you too, my poor, sweet sister! If grandfather knows remorse, I can sympathize. The moment has not arrived to introduce the names of his nearest kindred. I wait impatiently, yet patiently bide my time. "All things good drift to those who wait." B. F. W.

Hester read and re-read this note. Basil had not wavered in the least. She trembled as she realized that by fair means or foul he would try to possess himself in some way of his grandfather's property. Then she prayed for this beloved brother, so sorely tempted; for her grandfather, helpless, perhaps hopeless, in the dread hour swiftly approaching; and for herself, that she might be firm in what was right and remember there could be but one right. She knew of old Basil's sophistries. She dreaded arguments when she could not convince him and yet was unshaken in her own conviction of the unalterable principle underlying her remonstrance. Perhaps among all the young men at Bar Harbor not one was tempted as was her brother! Oh, why was it? She believed no temptation was beyond one's power to resist, if only there were the pure, strong will to renounce a base allurement. But the unflinching will belonged not to Basil, save when self lured him to his own undoing.

Her gaze rested on the golden-rod and asters. How they recalled that last sad autumn, when she transformed her mother's room into a lovely woodland bower of gold and purple and fragrant boughs of pine and hemlock and richly burning crimson maples,

that the weary eyes might smile and the weary heart gather some outdoor cheer from fields and hills she was to see no more! Oh, that tender, precious mother! Hester bowed her head and sank beneath the heavy waves of a ceaseless, overwhelming sorrow.

CHAPTER VI.

ALONG THE SHORE.

HALF an hour later Miss Patty was tapping at her door.

"O Hester!" cried she, "who do you think is in Bar Harbor?"

The old lady's eyes were beaming and her cheeks glowing. She held two cards in her hand and a note. On the cards Hester read: HENRI DE ROSAMBERT, MADEMOISELLE DE ROSAMBERT. The little French-English note was from Gudule de Rosambert, informing Miss Conway that she had accompanied her brother to Amérique; he needed change, for his health had suffered from overwork. They learned in New York that their dear old friend was at Bar Harbor, and so they had thought it "very pleasant to at once seek the only face they knew in wide, wide Amérique."

"They are in our hotel and I am on my way to see them. Come with me to welcome these dear French people to Mount Desert."

"You met them in Paris?"

"Yes; I was deeply interested in Mr. McAll's mission work and found Monsieur de Rosambert laboring earnestly with him for the people of Paris. He has given his wealth, time, and health most generously. Gudule has seconded him in every effort. She is also one after my own heart."

Though shy and dreading to meet strangers, Hester could not refuse Miss Patty's invitation. What would not a cordial greeting convey to her were she alone in France with Basil?

The refined and noble presence of the gentleman and lady, their musical voices and charming manners, won Hester immediately.

Monsieur de Rosambert appeared far from well, and his sister, evidently anxious, was thankful to meet a friend in the strange new land. Inquiries were made for Madame de Rosambert. She had sent many kind messages to Miss Conway and a little note, which Gudule presented, gracefully entreating the continuation of the old lady's friendship for her son and daughter.

"I am only too happy," responded Miss Patty. "I am certain this wondrous air of Mount Desert will not fail to perform its marvels for restoring strength to Monsieur de Rosambert."

"That is my most earnest wish."

In answer to Miss Conway's questions, the young man proceeded to give many most interesting details of the various missions in Paris, his fine, expressive face and animated gestures emphasizing each striking fact.

Hester felt that his was no ordinary mind. She noted the keenness of his eye — that evidence of a ceaseless habit of observation; the varied expressions of his face — an indication of a most sensitive, responsive nature; his sympathy with every class and condition of men, and his judgment in meeting individual diversities. Every glance and word appealed to Hester delightfully yet painfully; she was so conscious of

Basil's lack of these qualities. But a few years the senior of her brother, what had this man not accomplished with opportunities Basil would have ignored, even had he perceived them! And Gudule, so little older than herself, how happy must she not have been in working so faithfully by the side of such a brother!

Hester listened, self-condemned. Aside from her loving, persistent efforts to win Basil from his dissipated life and companions, she could recall no service performed for others. With deep interest, therefore, she hearkened to every conversation of the De Rosamberts in drives and walks, in which Miss Patty always thoughtfully included her.

One radiant morning, Miss Patty, who could never be induced to enter a boat, watched her friends and Hester as they glided down Frenchman's Bay to enjoy the marvelous beauty and grandeur of the shore. They were the guests of Jack Bolton, whose commodious yacht, the Sea Gull, in charge of Dick Tenby, had been placed at the De Rosamberts' disposal so long as they remained at Mount Desert.

"That chain of five islands in the bay is The Porcupines," explained Jack to his eager listeners. "They look bare and wild, don't they? But they are very interesting when approached."

"That I can believe," said Henri de Rosambert. "Those bold cliffs soar many hundred feet."

"Do you see how they are scarred by the gales and pierced by many caves hollowed by the waves?"

"Distinctly."

"Delicate grasses and wild flowers of lovely form

and tint live in the crevices of those old gray and red cliff sides."

"You have gathered them?" asked Gudule.

"I never cared to."

"No?"

"They are too happy in their homes, swaying in the blast, drenched by the spray, those little lovers of the wind and sea."

"There are sheep above the line of rocky beach," said Hester.

"They belong to some fishermen who live on the landward side of the islands where they are sheltered from the storms."

The four miles to the cliff of Schooner Head was a dream of delight to the little party. Never were sea and sky in more festal mood to grace the beauty of the island's enchanting shore.

"As it is low tide and such a sun shining, we must cross the cove and land. I wish you to see our Anemone Cave."

In the large cavern, to their great delight, they found a lovely garden of beaming flowers of the sea: anemones, orchids, zoöphytes, starfish, and fairylike weeds and mosses. All the tints of rarest, fairest gems lived in these anemones. Charming were the delicate, snowy daisy buds and amber and crimson varieties. The vault of the huge cave was a glowing reflector of the blue sunlit waves that then lay tranquilly sleeping outside that gorgeous treasure-house.

Hester was mute with awe and rapturous amazement; nor were her companions much less moved.

ANEMONE CAVE.

"It is only one mile and a half to Great Head," said Jack.

"And such a glorious day! Oh, may we not see it?" eagerly asked Hester.

Gudule's eyes offered the same petition.

"You have but to give the command," responded Jack.

"Then pray consider it given," said Henri de Rosambert, fascinated by the marvels he had seen and stirred by the remembrance of that devoted missionary colony from France, which, more than two hundred years before, had gazed on that same sea and sky and shore.

The yacht moved on, bearing him to a scene more wildly, appallingly grand than he had conceived. A lofty cliff, massive, bald, and savage in grandeur, overhangs the Atlantic, challenging the most prolonged and furious onslaught of wind and wave. The ceaseless thud and roar of monstrous billows rolling in and crashing against the giant cliff were deafening.

"It is almost impossible to land even in the calmest weather," said Jack. "There is a ravine at the back of Great Head. Creeping down, and then scrambling and sliding along the less precipitous side of the cliff, you can find your way underneath that vast bulk; but it is a dangerous experiment. With scarcely a foothold, you may crouch a moment under the overhanging walls: but there is no recompense, save to know you have dared and done it!"

An eagle, mighty in its strength of widespread wings and dauntless vision, soared over Great Head.

Tireless it moved with stately ease across the cloudless, dazzling blue, seeking its home on far-away Green Mountain.

"'The eagle suffers little birds to sing, and cares not what they mean thereby,'" quoted Hester.

Henri de Rosambert's quick ear caught the sentence.

"Ah, that's fine! How one needs just that quality of mind, mademoiselle, if one is attempting any work for one's self or another!"

"Translate it into French, Henri," besought Gudule, who was not as conversant with English as her brother.

"Then you think 'the singing of the little birds' refers to a carping spirit," she asked, "an unkind, narrow criticism which one must forget in conducting a noble enterprise?"

"Truly. Have I not seen you deliberately, unflinchingly meet just that discipline, my dear Gudule?"

"Only braced by your example!" returned the young girl, giving her brother a glance so fond and content that tears rushed to Hester's eyes in a yearning longing that Basil could justly win from her such an emotion.

"We must leave Newport Beach, Thunder Cave, Otter Cliffs, and Southwest Harbor for another day," said Jack, "as I have been trusted to bring you back to dine at Bayview."

The return sail was exquisitely lovely. The thirteen lofty mountain peaks swept in graceful outlines across the azure sky; wild, dim ravines and sunny, fertile valleys cleaving long deep shadows in their rounded

slopes. Rocky headlands soared from the blue water, their dusky crowns of evergreens breaking the silvery, hazy line where ocean seemed softly to touch and rest against the sky. In the distance a snowy wave would leap into the air, to fall swiftly and with irregular swaying motion glide in toward a stretch of sandy beach or rocky shore where the long, sharp, dangerous reefs and ledges crouched beneath the swelling sea.

Gliding in among other yachts, canoes, sloops, schooners, steam launches, and tugs, the graceful Sea Gull made the wharf.

Hester paused on the hotel veranda — at that hour almost deserted — seeing Madame de Chavigni seated there, an unopened book lying on her knee. The lovely face unconsciously expressed the loneliness and sorrow that had so touched the girl, and she could not pass the Creole lady by.

"You have been driving, Miss Wilmerding?" Her voice was sweet and mellow.

"No, madame; I have been enjoying my first sail, and seeing such marvels along the shore — Schooner Head, Anemone Cave, and Great Head. What does not coming to Mount Desert include? Cliffs, mountains, coves, islands, bays, streams, meadows, lakes, and fairy caves! Do you not sail often?"

"I?" Madame de Chavigni, usually so calm, was painfully affected. "No. I must be by the sea in summer, but never on it."

So low was the conclusion of the sentence that Hester barely caught it.

The stately mulatto maid, without whom the Creole

lady never walked or drove, appeared on the veranda bearing a light wrap.

"I do not need a wrap, thank you, Judith."

The maid retreated. The smile of Madame de Chavigni followed her.

"You do not know, Miss Wilmerding, how we of the South care for our earliest attendants, or how loyally we are loved and served by them. Even her freedom has not lured Judith from me. She was given to me when I was only two years old. Ah, here is Miss Conway coming to carry you away!"

Hester would fain have declined the Bayview hospitalities to remain with Madame de Chavigni; but, affectionately peremptory, Miss Patty hastened her from the veranda to prepare for the entertainment in honor of the De Rosamberts and other attractive strangers then in Bar Harbor.

"Madame de Chavigni does not accompany us?"

"No; she refused."

"And very wisely!" ejaculated Hester.

During the hours passed at beautiful Bayview she was in a regretful mood. How much she would have preferred strolling along the shore or on the cliffs with the Creole lady and her picturesque attendant! Miss Patty shook her head over her evident preoccupation; and Henri de Rosambert smiled, divining the cause from an impulsive remark of Hester's uttered in their drive over to the dinner.

CHAPTER VII.

GREEN MOUNTAIN.

UNTIL the hour struck when it was useless to hope for a note from Basil the next morning, Hester was untranquil. Ullescliffe Cottage haunted her sleeping or waking. Oh, if she could only trust Basil! Resolutely turning her thoughts from the disquieting theme, she gave them to the page before her: —

A lofty mountain lifts itself with perpendicular face against a quiet valley. When summer thunders with great storms, the cliff echoes the thunder and rolls it forth a second time with increased majesty; and we think that to be sublime storms should awaken mountain echoes. But a bird singing before it hears its own little song sung back again; and a child, lost and crying in the valley, hears its piteous calls and sobs reechoed. In sooth, the mountain repeats whatever is sounded, from the sublimest notes of the tempest to the sweetest bird carol or child's weeping; and it is just as easy to do the little as the great, and far more beautiful. God is our echoing rock, and from his heart is inflected every experience of joy or grief that any soul utters or knows.

Hester paused to accept the strength and comfort of the illustration; she had felt so alone in her anxiety and sorrow.

When a great organ sounds, it does not sound according to the size of your ear, but according to the magnitude of its own pipes. Its harmony does not depend on your ability to appreciate, but on the vastness and complexity of its own stops. So God, with infinite resources and power, does not according to our thought, but exceeding abundantly more than we can ask or think.

"Oh, that He would do thus for me!" was the cry of Hester's heart.

If God were to recount what he has done for us and will yet do, it would seem as though our life were a golden chain, in which one gold link clasped another — every hour being a link and every day lengthening the chain. Yet we frequently feel as if our life were a barren, desolate life, because we have not noticed what the benefits of God to us really were; because we have taken no such heed as to be impressed that the Lord was guiding and defending us and giving us the victory. One mercy rolls over another as the waves of the sea. We do not realize that the events redeeming the day, that fill this hour with peace, are special and divine mercies.

Again Hester paused. If her life held one intense anxiety, how many blessings were also hers! She had acknowledged them, but always while standing under the shadow of the one dark cloud. She could not forget that gloom. Was it right to forget it? or, better, what was the power to dispel it? She turned the page of her book: —

When a cloud drops low and it is rainy and chilly and misty, there is only discomfort. What is the rainbow? That same cloud with the sun shining on it, clothing it with glory and beauty. Trials may become rainbows to men.

Hester was answered. Closing her book she sat quietly thinking. The hour struck when Basil's note would reach her if it were to come that day. Never had that hour found Hester so little disquieted. Would that strong, calm angel might remain with her forever!

A tap at her door — yes; there was the note: —

ULLESCLIFFE COTTAGE.

I am more than satisfied, Hester, with the progress I am making in winning grandfather's favor. Even Dr. Duncan is beginning to congratulate me. Grandfather is, also, somewhat more comfortable, though there is no evidence that he will ever leave his present apartment. He spoke last evening of desiring to pass another year in Europe and of my accompanying him. Glancing at the physician, whose face was inscrutable, he sighed, seemingly disappointed not to find therein a cordial endorsement of his air castle. He deeply enjoyed the delicious sunshine of yesterday. From his broad windows he sees the green mainland, the islands, and many sails flitting across the blue bay. Children were calling in the large, outdoor freedom, and voices were gayly singing as the merry folk strolled by.

"What it is to be well and young — well and young!" I heard grandfather murmur.

"Have you no youthful relatives, Mr. Harcourt, who could cheer you by their affection and bright spirits?"

"I have none." His voice was low but decided — as if to end the theme.

"That is very sad for you," I persisted. "The love of the young" —

"Is pure selfishness," he interrupted.

"Pardon my differing with you," I responded.

"We will not discuss it, Fortescue."

But I am not discouraged. I intend to resume the subject later. Suddenly he turned and gazed at me steadily.

"Are you only a nurse?" asked he.

"I am only a nurse," I as steadily answered.

"Would it be infringing on our relations to inquire for what special object you desire a remunerative service?"

"Self-support."

He seemed disappointed. Evidently I had been credited with some benevolent or quixotic scheme. Fancy that, Hester!

"You have been expensively educated. By your parents?"

"Yes, sir."

"They are dead?"

"They are. I must frankly inform you that when I entered on my property I was too extravagant." This I said hoping to enlist his sympathy. Far from it!

"Then you are not to be entrusted with a second estate," he responded quickly.

"I have learned from experience," I as promptly replied, seeing the bequest I hoped he would leave me melting into nothingness.

Grandfather vouchsafed no answer. Imagine my amazement in the evening to have this question suddenly propounded: —

"Did you ever meet the son and daughter of Frederick Wilmerding?"

"Often."

He bent forward and scanned me keenly. Silent for some seconds, when he spoke his voice was unnatural: —

"Do you know the maiden name of their mother?"

"She was a Miss Harcourt."

"My daughter! You knew that, Fortescue, when you mentioned my 'youthful relatives'?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you refer to them?"

"I desired to win your interest."

"I possess no grandchildren!" he exclaimed in a tone so violent and with an expression so inimical that I was silent.

"When my daughter married, the tie of father and daughter lived no longer."

"Neither God, nature, nor law will uphold you, sir!"

"Law will uphold me, as you will learn when my will is read," he responded with a bitter, pitiless laugh.

"You pursue the dead into their graves and beyond it!" I cried.

"How dare you speak" — His voice failed and he became unconscious.

I hastened to apply the remedies that always relieved his sudden attacks of heart malady, and in an hour he seemed no weaker than in the morning.

I am now convinced that he will not relent towards us voluntarily; therefore at his death we may anticipate only poverty. Why do I remain at Ullescliffe? Because there must be found a motive powerful enough to melt his present resolution; or, he must become so dependent on me as "Fortescue" that he will voluntarily provide for my future. I can accomplish the latter and I see many tokens that encourage me; therefore I said I was "more than satisfied" with the progress I am making. B. F. W.

There was much in this letter to distress Hester. How could a rainbow illumine such a cloud? Oh, if her mother — her sweet mother — were only living, how easily, how gladly she would work for her! For work she would. She could not be dependent on Basil.

Seizing a pen, she implored him to relinquish his mad, wild scheme; it could lead to, and end, only in evil. They did not need, they could be independent of, a relative who ignored them. It was right, honest, and brave to be! She besought him to come to her: "Only promise to utterly abandon your former life and all will yet be well. We are young and strong. We can maintain ourselves; some plan will suggest itself. All honest work is honorable."

If Basil refused to listen, what could she do? Hester pondered. Might she ask the De Rosamberts to recommend her as a teacher of English? She had heard them say it was most desirable for French children to understand her language and literature. Somewhat cheered by her little plan for self-support, she addressed Basil's note and leaving her apartment proceeded to dispatch it by the waiting messenger.

"O Miss Wilmerding, I'm glad to find you!" cried Jack Bolton, rushing toward her with an invitation from his mother to join a hastily gathered party to ascend Green Mountain. The veranda was full of tourists preparing for excursions, or just returned from an early drive, row, or walk.

Half an hour later two mountain wagons left Bar Harbor carrying Mrs. Bolton and her party — Miss

Conway, Hester, the De Rosamberts, her own family, and some guests then at Bayview. As Madame de Chavigni had already departed for a drive, accompanied by Judith, they hoped to meet and induce her to join their expedition.

Turning from the glittering waves of Frenchman's Bay and the Sullivan Hills lying in purple shadow, they presently branched off to the left from the Eagle Lake road to enter a fragrant forest of pine, spruce, and birch. The sky was cloudless and the woods interlaced with sunlight. Squirrels leaped from bough to bough; sweetest bird notes floated round them. In such an air, with rippling brooks and silvery cascades still farther heightening enjoyment, Jack Bolton and Nelly Armitage could no longer endure imprisonment, even in a mountain wagon.

"We will meet you at Eagle Lake, but we must walk the remainder of the way!" they cried.

On went the cousins, doubly delighted with the excursion and the beautiful views, now they were on their own lithe feet.

"If only I had some twine or cord!" exclaimed Jack. "I have a plan"—

The remainder of the sentence was lost in astonishment and the plan never revealed, for Nelly drew from her pocket some neatly wound string that had long been waiting the right moment for presentation.

"Whose is that?" questioned Jack.

"Yours."

"Mine?"

"Yes."

"Nelly, I know girls are whimmy; but I never imagined you would buy new cord, wind it on a stick, and try to pass it off for my snarled, soiled old bunch!"

"But, Jack, it *is* yours! I undid the knots and then I washed it."

"Washed it? Girl all over!" Jack roared with laughter and Nelly laughed with him.

"Nelly," said he, pausing in the path and steadily regarding her with a suddenly sober countenance, "Nelly, I am indebted to you for the cord and the altogether absurd trouble you took to keep your promise. If you had half a dozen brothers, you would find such attentions did not pay! I'll reward you by a surprise — a pleasant one, equal to mine, some day. But oh, how could you?" seriousness melting into uncontrolled merriment as he surveyed the white, untangled cord.

"It's now too fine for me to use; I'll keep it as a memento. When I'm old and gray you'll find it among my trophies. Do look at that squirrel!"

Chatting and walking eagerly on, the time seemed brief till they caught a glimpse of gleaming Eagle Lake, the home of salmon and trout and the source of the delicious water supply of Bar Harbor.

"There is Madame de Chavigni!" exclaimed Nelly.

The Creole lady, attended by Judith, had just left her buckboard, and cordially greeted the cousins, who hastened toward her.

Encircled by forests of pine and cedar, overlooked by the rocky dome of lofty Sargent, reflecting Green

Mountain and other slopes that sweep down lovingly to form the frame for its silvery mirror, Eagle Lake lay dreaming in golden sunshine and crystal air. Little blue waves softly broke on its sandy beach edged with sedge grass and overhung by evergreens; rock fern covered with green masses of cumbersome old gray stone; the warm air was laden with the spicy breath of aromatic shrubs and trees clustering in the forest. On the edge of the wood, grotesquely twisted cedars hospitably offered low seats that Madame de Chavigni, Nelly, and Jack gladly accepted while awaiting the arrival of their party.

A train was coming down steep Green Mountain and at her pier was the little steamboat Wauwinett, pausing for tourists who desired to ascend that precipitous height. The lake was dotted with the craft of salmon and trout fishers and sailboats, containing one or more happy idlers enjoying the delicious day.

"Before we leave Mount Desert we must all cross 'the carry' between Eagle Lake and Jordan's Pond," said Jack. "O Nelly, if you wish to see moss, go there! There 's moss on the rocks lying along the side of the very narrow trail and moss underfoot; fern knee-high; fir boughs lacing overhead; birds singing; brooks that you can hear but cannot see and which you wish to find right away; partridge berries, arbutus, crow's-foot, and shepherd's pipe all about you. Oh, there 's our party!" and up jumped Jack, waving his cap.

Embarked on the lake, a twenty minutes' sail conveyed them to the little railroad station, and another

twenty-five minutes carried them up the perilous slope to the Summit House on the top of Green Mountain.

Transparent air and radiant sunlight lent themselves to enhance the far-reaching, exquisite views on mainland and Mount Desert, of mountains, valleys, lakes, cliffs, bays, curving shores, and the many islands gemming gleaming bay and sea. In the distance were the grand outlines of lofty, dreamy ranges; and one hundred and twenty miles away, soaring alone and beyond them all, was mighty Katahdin, leaning against the horizon's utmost azure rim.

Exclamations were intrusive and inadequate for those great, tender, glowing spaces of earth and sea and sky. To feel the lovely miracle was enough and almost more than two or three sensitive spirits there could bear.

To Hester the scene was thrilling in its strength of perfect majesty and beauty, contrasted with her weakness to cope with the daily, perplexing problem of life, demanding a wise solution. To Madame de Chavigni the painful, haunting memories, in which she so vividly lived that the empty present was a blank, were all quickened by that view from the mountain's summit; and to Gudule de Rosambert, the passionately pathetic yearning for France and home, never mentioned to her brother, was more deeply stirred by the infinite loveliness of the vision. As she stood apart, each feature of the beautiful face painfully responsive, Henri de Rosambert realized how much

she had sacrificed in accompanying him in his quest for strength and repose. From that moment the tie between them deepened, and his appreciation of her self-devotion was so tender as to soothe the longing she had been too noble to express.

CHAPTER VIII.

AWAITING THE SUNSET.

AFTER resting for an hour, and taking a lunch at the Summit House, Mrs. Bolton's party decided to stay on the mountain as late as possible.

"We should wait for the marvels of the sunset, or at least watch it from the ledge overlooking Eagle Lake," said Miss Patty, recalling past summers on Mount Desert. "In the meantime, how I wish Monsieur de Rosambert would repeat to us that portion of the exquisite 'Beleaguered City' which I heard him recite to the working men and women of Belleville, one of the Parisian suburbs!"

"Most certainly, if you desire it. What first arrested my attention in the narrative to which Miss Conway refers was the name of the mayor of the place — a Frenchman living in a French town, wherein occurred the remarkable events I shall presently recite to you. I repeated it on that special evening owing to a remark I heard on my way to Belleville. 'There is no God, I tell you, Pierre!' an angry voice exclaimed behind me. 'Go you shall not to those accursed meetings established by the Englishman!' I turned and saw the flushed face of Pierre Latour, a constant attendant at the gatherings in Belleville and elsewhere. Greeting him, I asked the name of his companion. 'Jean Valais, monsieur.' 'Friends,'

I said, 'come this evening to the Belleville rooms. I wish to narrate there what occurred in Semur after a remark similar to that of Jean Valais.' The latter assented courteously, much to Pierre Latour's amazement. 'To please Monsieur de Rosambert I will — for once — attend a gathering.' Expressing my appreciation of his courtesy, I led the way. The preliminary services concluded, I asked permission to narrate some circumstances that would awaken a deeper interest in the labors of Mr. McAll in Paris, which I did as follows: —

On such a summer's night as this, Jacques Richard was strolling down one of the streets of Semur, tossing in his hand a silver coin and exclaiming: "There is no God but money! With money one can do anything. Money is the good god!" The priest of Semur was carrying the rites of his church to a dying person. He came straight in Jacques' path, but Jacques did not move. The priest passed on, while devout women exclaimed at Jacques' irreverence. One cried out, "It is enough to cause the dead to rise from their graves to convince you!" But on down the street went Jacques carelessly, still tossing the silver coin, while proclaiming it the only god.

Jacques Richard was not the only one in Semur who scoffed at a belief in God. It seemed to be, more or less, the prevailing opinion in this old French town that for men to trust in Him was to perpetuate the pious folly of their grandmothers.

The mayor also had outlived his faith in the teaching

of the Roman Catholic Church, though careful not to malign it openly for the sake of his mother and his lovely wife, Agnès; and for another reason — unbelief was not good for the community he governed.

We all know how radiant is the summer of France. Imagine then the consternation of the people of Semur when darkness suddenly settled down over their city! It was six o'clock in the morning by all their clocks, yet the sun had not risen. When at last it faintly glimmered above the horizon, the streets seemed gray and unearthly. The aspect of the sky was leaden, as though a snowstorm were on the way. Fuller daylight came only at ten; and even then it was unnatural, ghostly. In the early afternoon the lamps were lighted; and as the night drew on no moon or stars relieved the awful gloom.

Who could help feeling that some visitation was at hand when the glorious summer in its prime was suddenly stricken as with the chill of death? Mayor Dupin and his assistant Barbon patrolled the city, through the dark streets in which lamps were of no avail, often nearly losing their way. A strange cold filled the air, the more appalling from the warmth that had reigned in Semur only the day before.

In their wanderings they met Paul Lecamus, called by many an impractical dreamer, but respected by all in the city for his upright conduct.

"Good-evening, Lecamus," said Mayor Dupin. "You are groping your way about in the dark like myself. Do you think a storm is approaching?"

Paul Lecamus shook his head. "If you will come

with me, I will show you something more wonderful than the darkness."

They were now near the gate of Saint Lambert. All was fast closed for the night, the people of Semur being within their houses and the usual watch set at the city gates. These officers received their mayor with evident relief, and he courteously regretted the discomfort the unusual cold was causing them. Indeed, so bleak was the air that Dupin shivered as it swept over him from the direction of the barred gates.

At this a look of intelligence was exchanged by the officers of the watch and they glanced at Dupin expectantly.

Paul Lecamus stepped forward, requesting that the small postern for foot passengers might be opened to give the mayor an opportunity to inspect the country outside.

At once Rion, one of the officers, caught the mayor's arm, entreating him to spare himself the experience of something strange, unusual, outside those closed gates.

This entreaty roused Dupin's sense of responsibility. He asked for a lantern and followed Paul Lecamus, who seemed struggling against an unseen crowd beyond the gate. The same sensation at once overpowered the mayor as he passed out. Gasping as if suffocated, he clutched the arm of Lecamus and paused. A multitude whom they could neither see nor touch seemed pressing against them in the intense darkness. Dupin staggered back, dragging Lecamus

with him, and both fell against the door of the watchman's office, which opened for their relief.

To the frightened queries of the watch Dupin could only reply that he had seen — nothing! The mystery was unexplainable. Even the mayor could not solve it. He hardly knew how he reached his home; probably Lecamus assisted him. To the questions of his wife and mother he could not respond. All was changed. Was it the hand of God?

Hour by hour the cathedral clock solemnly rang forth its tidings. As four, five, six, seven pealed over the city, darkness still reigned. Then the mayor arose and again went out into the silent streets, which before at that hour had always been so full of life and movement.

Even the great doors of the beautiful cathedral were still closed — those doors that the good sexton Laserques regularly opened with the dawn, to welcome to God's house those unhappy ones who might have found no night's shelter in the homes of men. Unusual as it was for Mayor Dupin to enter the cathedral — save once on Sunday, for the sake of example — something drew him toward this house of God. To find it closed must have been as though his mother had turned from him in his distress. Little as we think of God in our prosperity, we all know that if anxiety or trouble approaches, we feel our need of him.

Turning homeward, Dupin saw that the darkness was slightly lessening. A faint grayness was stealing over the street in which the people of Semur were gathering. All greeted the mayor, half ashamed, half

frightened at their own indolence, ascribing it to "the extraordinary weather — the coming of winter in the midst of summer." The mother and wife of Dupin were watching for him, weeping. They believed God was about to visit with his wrath the city that had grown so deaf and blind to his longsuffering goodness and grace.

Again the darkness deepened gradually, and by five o'clock it was as dense as on the day before. From his window the mayor could faintly descry a crowd gathering before the cathedral, ever increasing till the square was full. Joining this multitude, he inquired the subject of interest.

"Look, look, Mayor Dupin, on the great doors of our cathedral!"

"I see nothing." But even as he spoke he started; for there, traced in large letters of unearthly brightness, was the solitary word

SUMMONS.

There were other words which Dupin gradually deciphered, as they blazed out in the gloom. It was a summons to the people of Semur, name by name, Mayor Dupin heading the long list, to relinquish their places in the city, so unworthily filled, to those who knew the true meaning of life.

"*Go! leave Semur to those who know the true meaning of life.*"

Mayor Dupin had naught to answer. Dumb for some seconds, appalled, he then took courage, remembering his prominent position in Semur. Was it a

miracle, that writing on the cathedral doors? Was it a trick of some scientific member of the Academy of Semur? Or was it the work of the priest, to intimidate the careless of his parish?

It was soon evident that the latter was as ignorant as any of that awe-struck multitude concerning the unearthly, supernatural summons. Was it, then, from above — a command, a warning? The priest remembered the shadowy hand which wrote unknown words on Belshazzar's palace wall.

Mayor Dupin turned home. The command had been given; the letters of light had vanished, and darkness that might be felt reigned in Semur. Who slept that night?

At the hour that should have brought the summer's dawn, only a gray twilight was apparent. The people of Semur were leaving their homes, some carrying special treasures, others nothing, but all moving in the direction of the gates and postern of Saint Lambert. The bells of the cathedral were softly, sadly tolling, rung by invisible hands, as Mayor Dupin and, still more wonderful, the priest, led forth the solemn procession filing out of Semur. That Jacques Richard, the open unbeliever, should be banished to yield his place to those who knew the true meaning of life — to glorify God — was not surprising. Evidently he was forced along against his will — not acquiescing quietly like the priest. Many wondered whether he remembered his cry, "There is no god but money!"

The gates were reached; the multitude strove to pause, to ascertain why, in the wintry twilight of

that July day, they were forcibly expelled. Viewless hands drove them forth and on — ever on! All had passed out. Then, grown desperate, they tried to return; but slowly, slowly, slowly the gates were closed before their eyes! Mayor Dupin rushed forward and dashed himself against the postern door, crying, —

"Open, open, in the name of God!"

Like a faint echo from a mighty trumpet came the answer: —

"Closed, closed, in the name of God!"

Wonderful to relate, as the exiles turned from the gates and wall of Semur, which separated them like a stone and iron girdle from their beloved homes, the darkness suddenly vanished and the blessed sunlight once more flooded the country. Summer had been given back to them! The river flowed, the sweet, warm air blew on them, and Nature welcomed the outcasts royally. In the intense relief of enjoying summer after that awful darkness, their lost homes were for a moment forgotten, but only to be quickly remembered, till all wept and clung to one another despairingly.

What could faith in science do for them then? It had failed. Not one scientific man amid that multitude could suggest a way of opening those miraculously closed gates, or explain how or why they were closed. The Church, in the person of the priest, had failed too. Was he not driven forth with his flock?

"My children," began the priest; — but at that moment the cathedral bells, that had not yet ceased their mournful tolling, broke into a full and joyous peal —

all the bells wildly clanging as if a thousand hands had caught the ropes.

The exiles were dumb with awe. Then those who had known most of holy teaching and had believed — though, alas! not willingly obeyed — rushed back to the gates, crying, —

"Open to us — open to us, our beloved! Do you think we have forgotten you? We have never forgotten you!"

A communication from the Unseen suddenly calmed this imploring appeal. To the mayor and others it seemed only sweet notes of a silver trumpet; but to those who had wept beseechingly for recognition words were audible, and they wept no more! They fell on their knees, a wonderful light shining in their faces, ready to obey the wishes of those beloved ones beyond their sight.

But to the mayor, to his mother, and even to the priest, nothing had been revealed; they had caught no words of that heavenly message. Mayor Dupin turned to the priest: —

"What is it?" he cried. "You are our spiritual director; you know what relates to the Unseen. What are the words that have been spoken to a few in this great multitude?"

Tears were rolling down the priest's cheeks as he shook his head, saying, —

"I know not. I am a miserable, unworthy one, like the rest. What your wife and those few blessed ones heard is between them and God. I have been of the world, like the rest. I have profaned His holy altar!"

Presently many grew reckless, and entering the tavern near the gates of Saint Lambert indulged in dissipation shocking to the priest, the mayor, and the more thoughtful exiles from Semur.

Strange was the night. Outside the city it was moonlight; but Semur was a blank, its walls dimly discernible; not even the lofty cathedral towers were visible above the line of the ramparts.

Humbled, terrified, Jacques Richard drew near the mayor, asking whether they were indeed those they held as "the dead" who had returned, by the will of God, to Semur, and whether it was the omission of the daily service of prayer at the hospital chapel that had brought this expulsion upon them.

"It is you, and such as you, who are the cause of our trouble," replied Mayor Dupin vehemently. "You thought and said there was no watch kept up there!" pointing skyward. "You thought and said God would not take the trouble to punish you; you went about the streets of Semur tossing your silver coin and crying, 'There is no God! This silver is my god!' Go, Jacques Richard — go, and beseech your money to help you!"

Jacques moved away silenced and realizing for the first time somewhat of his own profanity, while Mayor Dupin gazed on the moonlit river and the darkened city from which he and his had been driven, till his spirit melted and he cried in agony, "O God, whom I know not, am I not to thee as my little Jean is to me — a child, and less than a child? Do not forsake me in this awful darkness! Would I, could I, forsake

Jean were he ever so disobedient? O God, if thou art God, thou must be a better Father than I."

The wife of Dupin drew near him.

"O my beloved Agnès, give me your counsel."

"If we will submit our hearts, those unseen ones will return to their sacred homes and we to ours. Have those now dwelling within those closed gates come for nothing? Was Semur a city of saints? God has permitted this great tribulation to bring us to self-recollection."

"But what proof have we, my wife?"

Mayor Dupin turned toward Semur. Oh, what a glorious moment was that! Above the cloud that wrapped the city there was a parting, a rent in the darkness, and in mid-heaven the cathedral towers pointed to the sky!

Dupin cried exultantly, "The towers! the towers!"

Oh, how the priest and all those banished ones thanked God as their weary eyes beheld this token that he had not forgotten them! Many burst into tears — many who had not cared to attend divine worship in that cathedral for years.

"Oh, if we were but there!" they cried.

"'I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord,'" repeated the priest.

"This change, this lifting of the awful cloud, must have a meaning," said the mayor. "It has been suggested to me that I should send a messenger, an ambassador, into Semur."

All shrank from seeking to enter while those unseen ones still remained in charge.

"The mayor speaks at his ease; but who will risk himself?" It was Jacques Richard who thus insolently spoke.

"I will risk myself!" cried Dupin.

A mocking voice in the crowd exclaimed, "If there is any one sent, the priest should represent us."

The priest stepped forth, his pale face flushing.

"Here am I; I am ready! But he who spoke spoke to mock me. Is it reverent in this presence?"

"Mayor Dupin," said one, "we have been too indifferent in the past; but for the future all shall be changed. Our ambassador must be empowered to promise everything — submission, obedience to all that those blessed unseen ones may command in the name of God."

Many of the women wept, saying, "Ah, it will be heaven on earth, if we comply with what the holy ones require!"

Suddenly from the ramparts of Semur came the long peal of a trumpet, each person among that crowd feeling himself specially addressed.

The commotion was intense: for all knew it was a summons — the beginning of a communication from those within the walls. The excitement was awful as from the gloom a single figure slowly emerged, till its nearer approach revealed one like unto themselves — Paul Lecamus.

Delivered from their terror at sight of one well known, all clustered about Lecamus, who gave the message with which he had been charged: —

"They who have sent me would have you know

that they have come to Semur in love, not in anger, and because it was divinely ordered. They are not the dead; they are the immortal. They are those who truly live — elsewhere. They have other work — work that has been interrupted because of this trial. They ask, 'Do you believe now? Do you believe now?' That is what I am bidden to demand."

"Ah, yes, yes, yes!" the people cried.

Some wept aloud, and some held up their hands to the sky. "Never, never again will we deny religion; never will we fail in our sacred duties. They shall see how full the cathedral will be! We know at last how awful it is for a city to be without piety!"

"Then you are to send two representatives," said Lecamus, "two whom you esteem the highest, to speak to the unseen ones face to face."

Immediately there was a tumult among the people, and they elected and hurried Dupin and the priest forward to the city gates.

"We promise — we promise everything; only let us return home!" cried the people.

On the edge of the darkness stood Dupin and the priest: then the little postern of Saint Lambert slowly, slowly opened and closed, and the two stood within Semur. There was a steady pale twilight by which they saw everything; but not a soul was visible, not a shadow: all was vacant in the soft twilight; nothing moving, nothing visible. The great doors of the cathedral were wide open and so was every lesser portal. How spacious the city looked! how silent! how strange!

"We are ambassadors in vain," said the priest. "The message with which we came was known and has been accepted. Enough. Whoever they were who were in Semur, their visitation is over and they are gone."

"I think so," Mayor Dupin answered faintly. "So far as mortal eye can see, we are alone in Semur. Have you forgotten your psalm? Our cathedral is now open to you, reverend father."

It was an inspiration from above, for the mayor had never been religious. With one impulse priest and mayor turned, crossed the silent square and ascended the great steps. All was fair and quiet in God's beautiful house. The voice of the priest was broken by tears as it floated out upon the air and filled the sacred place. The mayor knelt behind him and wept.

Then there came a sound that made their hearts leap — the bells of the cathedral pealing over their heads with hurrying notes and clang of rapturous joy!

Those outside Semur heard the sound and saw with wondering ecstasy the cloud and the mist and the darkness that had enwrapped Semur suddenly rise from the walls. The roofs of the houses reappeared and then the beautiful cathedral was revealed against the blue sky.

Before night the population had returned through the no longer closed gates and the houses were illumined as for a festival. The cathedral doors stood open, with a glow of tapers gleaming on every side. The mother and wife of Mayor Dupin, leading little Jean, came out into the great square on their way to

thank God for their return to Semur. The mayor followed with a slow and solemn step. The people ranged themselves behind him, also moving slowly and reverently on with uncovered heads, pale and worn with their late watching and anxiety. Those who had already entered the cathedral felt a thrill of awe as they listened to the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of the people ascending the steps and entering the long, broad nave.

Then the priest sang the *Te Deum*, and as with one voice all that immense congregation sang with him. The massive walls of the ancient cathedral seemed to throb with the sound that rolled upward, as no holy song had ever risen in Semur in the memory of man: —

> We praise thee, O God:
> We acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
> All the earth doth worship thee,
> The Father everlasting.

The *Te Deum* concluded, the Creed recited, and some penitential prayers offered, the people poured forth quietly and reverently from the cathedral into the soft evening, with the moon and stars shining above and all the friendly lights below: on they moved with deepest emotions of gladness and gratitude to God who had permitted them to return to their beloved home.

Paul Lecamus was sought by many for an account of his stay in the city after they had gone. They knew him for a devout man, thinking much of the eternal, which is the unseen. They knew he had often grieved that they had been so blind and deaf to their highest,

most sacred duty, but they did not know that he felt sure that God would arrest their indifference by a revelation which they must pause to mark and obey. Of all in Semur, he alone had not been surprised at the summons so suddenly gleaming on the great doors of his beloved cathedral.

Overcome by agitating thoughts, Lecamus had sought his garden, where, seated under a trellis, he fell asleep, to awaken in the early dawn conscious that the people were passing — had passed — out of Semur and that he was alone therein! On the closing of the gates he was conscious of a flow and movement of unseen beings, a passing to and fro without a sound, and apparent only to the soul. But the energy, the force, the life in the unseen ones were plainly perceptible. All seemed darkness in Semur to the exiles without the walls; but it was only in seeming. The ramparts were wrapped in gloom, but within the city arose a sweet and wonderful light that was neither of the sun nor of the moon. After the ringing of the cathedral bells the silence also departed as the darkness had vanished. Lecamus began to hear a murmur of voices and then the words that were spoken. Every tone thrilled with gladness and hope: —

Send us, send us to our fathers' homes!
Many are our brethren and dear.
They have forgotten, forgotten, forgotten!
But when we speak, then they will hear.

Others answered: —

We have come, we have come to the homes of our fathers!
Sweet are the homes — the homes we were born in.
As we remember, so will they remember.
When we speak, when we speak, oh, then they will hear!

As they sang, there was joy and expectation everywhere. It was more beautiful than the music of earth, for it overflowed with desire and longing and yet also with hope and gladness; whereas among us, where there is longing, it is always sad.

Their song was of what they had come to do, of the help they yearned to give. Of those outside Semur, those banished ones, they thought and spoke with overflowing love and tenderness.

> We have come out of the Unseen,

they sang again,

> For love of you; believe us! believe us!
> Love brings us back to earth;
> Believe us! believe us!

"How was it you did not — could not hear?" asked Lecamus of the people who thronged around him. "When I heard those blessed singers, I wept: they swept the heart out of my bosom. The music floated all about the walls: —

> Love brings us back to earth;
> Believe us! believe us!

"After that there was a great change in the city. The choirs returned slowly from the ramparts and there was a sighing in all the streets, a sob breathing in the air: —

"'They cannot hear us: or they will not hear us!'"

"The whole city, where so many were coming and going to and fro, was full of wonder and dismay.

"'They cannot hear us!' they sighed. 'Our voices are not as their voices. They cannot see us! We

have taken their homes from them and they know not the reason.'

"Ah, how I longed," said Lecamus, "that those banished ones should hear and that they should understand! Semur was filled with this wish. Suddenly I was conscious of One passing through the city and as he passed I heard these words: 'Neither will they believe though one rose from the dead.'

"A murmur floated up; then there came a silence.

"I was forced to rise as by an unseen hand from the cathedral steps where I had been seated, and was led gently across the great square toward the gate of Saint Lambert. I went steadily on, never doubting that the gates would open to me, though I had not attempted to withdraw from the city before. The postern rolled slowly open and I was softly put forth into the morning light, into the shining of the sun.

"I have now said all I have to say. The message I delivered was the utterance of those who lovingly sent me; I can tell no more. 'Do you believe now? Do you believe now?'"

Then the people of Semur slowly and silently left Lecamus and returned to their homes. One would imagine that they ever after recalled that merciful visitation reverently, and changed their lives according to its teaching; but it was not so. Some remembered; the many forgot.

"You may wonder how my Belleville audience received the narrative. For some moments no one seemed to breathe; then one arose and offered the

most thrilling petition I have ever heard for a quickened faith in God — for faith to live remembering the Unseen and for a realization of 'the true meaning of life.' Jean Valais grasped my hand and Pierre Latour was mute with emotion. Since that evening those two men have missed no service in Belleville. Ah, how the sunset is flushing the sky with beauty!"

Against a background of azure, foam-white clouds were massed in lofty cliffs, while in the east lay calm lakes of silvery green or amber. More and more brilliant grew nature's wondrous, beauteous painting. The sea seemed to vibrate in the glowing light, and a warm lilac mist tenderly caressed the silvery peaks of the distant mountain ranges. So gorgeous became the effulgence of color that the summer moon, risen on the opposite horizon, was also suffused and rested there, a great, softly gleaming ruby. The many islands, the hills, the lakes, the cliffs, the shore, quivered in the radiance of the sunset.

Each gazer was thrilled by the ethereal beauty according to the sensitiveness of his receptivity. Madame de Chavigni closed her eyes, intense mental pain written on every feature; Miss Conway's dear old face was calm, sweet, and thankful for another beautiful sunset; Jack's countenance was as usual, but his mind was thrilled with new emotions set flowing by the narrative of Monsieur de Rosambert; Nelly stood by him, her face beaming — the impersonation of youthful hope; Hester and Gudule impulsively clasped each other's hand as the wild, indescribable marvel and glory in the west increased

in loveliness and majesty; Monsieur de Rosambert approached Hester, intuitively seeking her sympathy in his own delight in the wonders of color the sky was revealing and the earth repeating.

"Hi! hi!" softly ejaculated Judith, enchanted, as are all her race, with splendor and variety of tint; but forgetting the vision the moment she beheld suffering imprinted on the fair face of her beloved mistress.

As they entered Bar Harbor, of all the radiant glory, there remained only, low down on the horizon, a vivid belt of crimson burning against the heaving waves. The moon had mounted higher, her disk now silver clear — a crystal lamp irradiating sea and shore.

Hester was oppressed by a sadness she could not explain. Had the day been too lovely? the sunset too pathetically beautiful? The face of Madame de Chavigni repeated the same sadness, but it was the sadness of an immeasurable sorrow. Hester and Gudule, painfully touched, longed to clasp the hand of the Creole lady in theirs, but by no word or gesture did they dare invade the reserve surrounding her.

CHAPTER IX.

ON BAR ISLAND.

FOR several days Jack was unusually silent. When he did converse his tone was so ungracious and his replies so brief that his family were glad to allow him to dispose of his leisure as he chose. Fishing expeditions off Egg Rock and Schooner Head, or further up the bay above the Porcupine Islands and at Ball Rock, consumed much of his time. Sometimes he would take a sail over to Sorrento, whence the beauties of Bar Harbor are seen as from no other point. Once he rode over to Sullivan and lunched alone at the Swiss Châlet, commanding one of the grandest views along the coast.

Jack, who had seen the Italian Sorrento, did not disdain its American namesake, though he grumbled because the old Indian name Waukeag had been discarded.

Of what Jack thought or on what he meditated during these solitary trips no one dreamed save Nelly. She alone was unruffled by his sarcastic answers, till he strode in one morning with a book open at its fly leaf.

"That is your writing!" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Who is the 'Jack' whose portrait you have drawn for general edification or your own private gratification?"

Nelly held out her hand for her copy of Whittier, her face suffused, her lips trembling, and her eyes filled with tears, distressed at the possible effect of what she had done.

"O Jack! you will not understand" —

"Try me!" he retorted grimly. "But first, did you intend this graphic picture for Jack Bolton or some other Jack?"

"It was one morning in the garden, when I had been specially annoyed by your" —

"Humph! You may present me with this precious volume. Your lines of soliloquy are valuable to me. I'll preserve them as a memento."

Jack extended his hand, smiling down on her with an entirely unexpected merry laugh and sudden clearing of countenance, such as Nelly had not seen since the ascent of Green Mountain.

"I have forgiven you these stiff remarks — not particularly gratifying to me — because you spent a half hour thinking only of me; doubtless wishing I were more lovable! Come and see my latest importation from Boston, and then we'll go sketching to Bar Island."

"Oh! really?"

"Yes, really! Am I not proving my forgiveness? But can you care to accompany such a good-for-nothing as I?"

"You have improved, Jack. In this mood you are positively agreeable."

Jack laughed his mellow laugh; it was very sweet, but seldom heard except by Nelly, and not too often by her.

Hurrying his cousin away to one corner of the grounds, sheltered by blooming bushes and overhung by trees, Jack went down on his knees before a rabbit-hutch, his brown face all excitement.

"O Helen! here 's a fellow in a dead faint! Was there ever any one more unlucky than I?"

Nelly looked into the commodious hutch. One rabbit was ill, certainly; but there were five others apparently healthy.

"Jack, you should allow them more liberty."

"They don't know as much yet as Little Bopeep's sheep, and would n't come home."

"I believe they would."

"Girls' penetration and fondness for giving advice on a matter of which they know nothing!" scoffed Jack. "Nevertheless, on your recommendation, I 'll test these five brethren. If they run away or die — Here goes! Off with you!"

The rabbits were too much amazed to run; but soon, finding their liberty no longer abridged, scampered away.

"As for this fellow," pointing to the sick rabbit — a beautiful, snowy creature — "he is on the point of expiring, and not worth trying to save."

"Will you let me try what I can do for him?"

"You, Helen?"

"Yes."

"He will not live out the day."

"Poor, pretty little thing! Was n't sunshine sweet to it, Jack?"

Nelly gently raised the rabbit and laid her ear against its side.

"Its heart beats faintly."

"How sorry you seem! What's a rabbit? You can have dozens."

"But never again this one. It grieves me to see it suffer. It should be so happy."

"Take it, Nelly."

The little creature was tenderly carried from the hutch, deposited in a softly lined box, and placed in a corner of Nelly's room, after she had administered to it a few drops of a ruby liquid. Then she sat down to care for it, while Jack departed for a moment, thrusting his head in at Meta's open door.

"Where is Nelly?"

"Nursing a sick creature."

"A sick child?"

"At the point of death, judging from the harrowing symptoms — eyes closed, pulse nothing, white as death."

Meta pushed aside her writing case.

"How did Nelly find it?"

"Asked for it."

"Where is the mother?"

"Vanished to regions unknown! It had five brothers; but they left it to its fate."

"What wretches!" cried Meta, springing to her feet.

"Your indignation is commendable."

"Was there no one but Nelly to care for this poor child?"

"No one."

"I'll go at once and help her!"

"You had better obtain mamma's permission. If the patient has an infectious disease" —

"Oh, is there danger for my dear, dear Nelly?" catching Jack's strong arm.

"Your 'dear, dear Nelly' is safe. The only danger is strength lost by nursing, and general prostration of the nervous system."

"I'll speak to mamma. Judson can relieve Nelly."

"Wait till you hear again from me," and smothering a laugh Jack vanished.

"O Jack, the rabbit is better!" cried Nelly.

"Nonsense!'

"Come in and see."

The pretty creature was nibbling some lettuce, its eyes bright, its frame full of new vigor.

Jack indulged in a long, low whistle.

"I believe you have bewitched it — sprinkled it with fairy water. Christen it with the name of the man who fell among thieves between Jerusalem and Jericho; you are the good Samaritan, Helen. Let me carry the rabbit you've saved and deposit it in the hutch while we're at Bar Island; but first, just show it to Meta, or she'll be following us with mamma, the housekeeper, and the butler."

Meta's astonishment and indignation at Jack only increased her brother's merriment, as he explained to Nelly the cause his sister had had for concern.

"I'll never believe you again!"

"Oh, yes, you will! Come, Nelly."

"Where are you going?"

"Sketching."

"But where?"

"We will tell you on our return."

"Jack, you 'll drown Nelly! I know you" —

Jack vanished, carrying the rabbit.

How blue was the heaving, sparkling bay! How the sea gulls veered and dived and circled, then floated away on snowy wings to their lofty, rocky haunts!

"It will be a rough row, Helen! Do you mind — I mean, are you afraid?"

"Not in the least, Jack."

"Suppose the boat should upset?"

"I have no fear."

"But imagine it! Shall we go on?"

Her smile shone on him and Jack pulled with a will.

"It might have been better to have gone to the island on a smoother sea; or to have waited till the bar was uncovered. It is a pretty walk, Helen. Some afternoon we will take it and have tea on the pebbly beach on the northern side. The sunset is fine there — such a view of Frenchman's Bay, Bar Harbor, and the islands!"

"Yes. I heard your mother proposing a gypsy tea to Miss Conway and her friends, because the woods on the northern side were such a charming resort on a summer afternoon."

"It is even prettier in autumn, when the foliage is changing."

It was extremely difficult to land that day. Several times Jack thought the boat would upset — only he

had braced his strong will and arms to prevent such a catastrophe.

He adroitly balanced his craft on the edge of a wave, and then, seizing the advantage of an eddy, ran the boat up on the beach.

The rocks were sharp and slippery. Their feet were wet and Nelly's limbs lame before they had established themselves on just the jutting crag that suited them; but the girl cheerily braved all discomforts — even forgetting them in the grand view, the delicious briny air, and the exhilaration attendant on accomplishing what they had desired.

"I am proud of my captain!" said Nelly, knowing they had been in some danger and appreciating the coolness and skill of her cousin.

Jack's sketching pad was open.

"Turn your head a little more, Helen; I wish to catch your profile. That is too much! I don't care for the back of your head."

"I 'll transfer you to my book, Jack."

"Nonsense! Such a square face as mine is not worth taking."

"Very good for a study, you know."

"On that ground, pray make a copy! Helen, do you think a year with you would transform me? I mean seeing and hearing you every day, for one year."

"What an idea!" laughed Nelly. "I would like some one to transform me." Then becoming grave she said in her own simple, direct way: "What we both need is the one perfect Example, Jack."

"I understand."

"Do you? And will you study with me?" eagerly asked Helen.

"No."

"Then will you study alone?"

"No. I am not ready to take up the Gospels! I wish you could see the pile of Greek and Latin books I have to work on; not to mention French and German. When I study, I study. There is no play in my work."

"I know that, Jack."

Nelly's brightness was quenched. Jack's heart smote him as he remembered the knotted cord and many other unselfish kindnesses.

"I hate promises, Helen, because I'm committed to keep them! But you have remembered to please me often and often; and now I'll please you. If you'll give me a Greek Testament, I'll read it ten minutes a day."

"O Jack!"

"Such a smile is worth ten minutes a day, Helen!" exclaimed Jack.

"Will it be at night or morning?"

"Oh, at night! I'm in too big a hurry in the morning. Do you suppose reading ten minutes a day would have saved the people in The Beleaguered City from that visitation?"

"Who can doubt it — if they had believed and then obeyed?"

"Don't forget to write my name and the date as a record of the rash vow I have taken to please you. Did I not promise on Green Mountain to give you a surprise equal to mine some day?"

"You have certainly done so!" said Nelly, regarding her cousin with a beaming smile.

"I would have made that promise to no one living save yourself. Why? Because you are — Helen! That is all — and that 's enough! Now what will you sketch?"

"I would rather watch your pencil."

"I had no idea you were so indolent. Let us copy that grand cliff on which a sea gull has just alighted."

"Do gulls think, Jack?"

"In their way. It 's instinct rather than thought; is n't it?"

"I suppose so. How wonderfully beautiful it is! And it is only one of millions. O Jack, it has flown away! The pretty, silvery creature, free and gay!" cried Nelly, watching the bird as it floated across the sparkling bay.

CHAPTER X.

A SUMMER'S DAY.

HESTER held in her hand a large bunch of flowers for Madame de Chavigni. Her interest in the lovely Creole lady had become stronger and deeper. The mellow, heart-winning voice, graceful movements, noble character and rare mental gifts, had awakened Hester's warmest love ; while the sadness due to an agonizing experience, separating Madame de Chavigni from the ordinary joys of life, stirred her sympathy. In the companionship of the beautiful, sorrow-stricken woman she found the chief delight of each day. They read, talked and walked together, and the heart of the elder lady was more and more closely drawn to the young girl, whose love and repression of curiosity concerning her life she gratefully appreciated. Constance de Chavigni enjoyed being loved and unquestioned as well as did Hester Wilmerding. Sometimes she felt almost ready to reveal to her the secret of her blighted life — that long, ceaseless, torturing memory ; and how her faith had been strained beyond its power to bear. She remembered only too well letters, words, and exhortations that had flowed in upon her from those who could advise but not sympathize, strengthen, or console, and shrank from those worthless comforters, wrapping silence and reserve around her more carefully, that

they might not approach too near. Though Hester had had no similar experience, she could enter into that of her friend and be silent, remembering that she was in an unknown realm.

Leaving her flowers for Madame de Chavigni and carrying Basil's last note in her hand, Hester went down the main street of Bar Harbor, longing for the solitude of the shore. Fringing gayly the wharves and jetties, canoes and rowboats curtsied gently on the slight groundswell. Sailboats, yachts, schooners, and small steamers were moving off between Mount Desert and Bar Island. In the delicious air and glorious sunshine Hester sought the sea. Along the beach small tide waves softly broke. Passing on, she crossed a wall of jagged rocks, at that low-tide hour revealing their grotesque forms, hewn by the long, rough roll of the sea. Beyond was a small cave almost free of water, where she saw countless sea urchins, their home overhung by rocks whereon cedars and hemlocks threw deep, cool shadows. Up higher grew black spruces and balsamic firs. She longed to climb and gather the feathery wreaths of ground pine which she knew were interlacing tree trunks, gracing rough gray stones, and wandering over beds of moss where in springtime the rosy arbutus deliciously scented the air.

Hester went on till she came to another piece of open coast; then she sat down on a rock, which in a few hours would be concealed by the foaming surge. Still she delayed opening Basil's letter. Even his handwriting seemed a discordant note in the peaceful

harmony of ocean, earth, and sky. Sailboats floated by; steamers passed; the sunshine grew warmer and the air more delightful. The presence of the gulls completed the picture to Hester's entire satisfaction. They circled above her and then paused in their flight on a lofty, jutting rock, where she contentedly watched their white wings glistening in the sunlight. Sky and sea — sky and sea! Oh, how indescribably beautiful and restful! She allowed the moments to pass unheeded in her intense enjoyment. Then, with a sigh, she roused herself to open Basil's note: —

ULLESCLIFFE COTTAGE.

I am perplexed, Hester. There are moments when I am sure grandfather has recognized me. It certainly is not to my discredit that I have come to nurse him; yet lately his voice has been frosty and his manner far from pleasing. Shall I remain? I have debated and am debating the question, and am always confronted with a calm, firm "Yes." For away from Ullescliffe I possess no influence. With grandfather, attending carefully to his needs, reading aloud, playing chess, talking when he cares to converse, I have an opportunity to conquer his long-cherished aversion. Why should he not care for me?

Yesterday he asked abruptly, "Does Hester resemble her father or mother?"

"She so closely resembles her beautiful mother that old friends of Mrs. Wilmerding immediately recognize her as her daughter."

For an instant a ripple of emotion passed over grandfather's fine old face, only to leave it colder and harder. I believe he relented for that brief space; I believe he still loves his daughter's memory; but former resolutions oppose him when nature cries for concessions.

Dr. Duncan says he will pass away suddenly — while I am talking with him or in his sleep or while he sits gazing out over the blue bay dreaming of many persons and events linked with his vanished years.

Is he aware of this? Yes. This morning I found him reading a sonnet of Michael Angelo: —

> My feeble bark hath almost reached the shore
> And life's tempestuous sea is passed.

He mused some moments and then said: —

"The longest day will have its sunset. Mine is near."

As to his real feeling toward us, my one gleam of light in the darkness is that if he has recognized, he does not dismiss me. I long to show him your miniature and my mother's in the locket I always wear. But I hesitate, doubt, and wait. Are you happy? I trust you are enjoying Mount Desert. Dismiss all anxiety; all will be well — all shall be as I have planned it! B. F. W.

The last sentence sent the shiver of coming ill through Hester's nerves; yet, what could Basil effect? She smiled at her nervousness and chided her foolishness. The persistent dislike of her grandfather would only leave them as they were. After a few more weeks at Ullescliffe Basil would be convinced of failure; then perhaps he would confer seriously with her concerning their future. She pondered earnestly by what means she could support herself and free Basil from the unnecessary strain. She had not yet questioned the De Rosamberts for fear of compromising or exposing her brother.

"O Miss Wilmerding, is it here I find you? Miss Conway, Madame de Chavigni, and Gudule are anxious on account of your long disappearance. My sister said she had seen you walking toward the sea; I volunteered to restore you. May I carry you back to Bar Harbor?"

At the voice of Henri de Rosambert Hester had risen from her rock to see that the tide was rapidly

rising and that soon her return walk would have been an impossibility. The appearance of Monsieur de Rosambert's boat was most opportune.

"Oh, thank you; you are very kind. I am sorry to have caused so much trouble."

"No trouble; but a pleasure, believe me."

"Before we leave this lovely spot, Monsieur de Rosambert, do look at that great archway of granite spanning that little cove."

"How resplendent are its hues! The tide serving, we might float this boat in on the waves. The cove has sea anemones?"

"Yes. There is a bit of pebbly beach on which to rest its keel," said Hester, longing to attempt an entrance. "Ah, and I also see harebells growing in a cleft of the crag, but beyond reach. Pretty things! always gazing on blue sky and sea and reflecting their color."

"What becomes of their tender grace in storms?"

"They are still at home," answered Hester, smiling brightly, and turning again for one farewell glance at the prismatic hues of the cloven rock, the harebells, and the foliage of the trees above the archway where chance seeds had sprung into such life and beauty.

"The coast of Maine is unusual, is it not, even in your wonderful country?" asked Monsieur de Rosambert, rowing toward Bar Harbor. "I find the sea everywhere interpenetrating the shore. Its deep bays hide in primeval forests into which ships might glide and conceal themselves."

"I am told it is so, monsieur. And the coast is so

beautiful with overhanging foliage. Have you noticed the large variety of evergreens?"

"With much interest. I saw yesterday firs, pines, cedars, white pines, and hemlocks, and was assured that one might find other members of that family. From the boughs of the old hemlocks I gathered long, gray moss floating in most picturesque beauty. Higher up the bank we found the birch and larch. Gudule and I are wishing to remain for the autumnal glory."

"To see Aladdin's glowing garden of gems! Miss Conway has told me of the brilliant effects of the scarlet sumachs, rock maples, golden larches, beeches, and birches flaming against the blue-black spruces and cedars dark as night. You do not have the Indian summer in France, monsieur?"

"No; but we have in southern France much of what I conceive your soft, hazy days to be; a tranquillity and dreaminess — almost sadness — veil earth and sky."

A breeze had quickened the waves, gulls drifted by, sails gleamed in the brilliant sunshine. Every rock, cliff, cape, and distant headland lay clearly etched against a clearer sky. Close at hand the long branches of the somber spruces and shaggy hemlocks bending to the sea enhanced the lovely effect of dazzling sunlight and the measureless blue distance of the horizon line.

"How I love color!" cried Hester. "When a child the mere naming of the jewels in the wall of the New Jerusalem fascinated me."

"Have you learned the significance of the order as well as the meaning of those precious gems?"

"No, monsieur; but how I wish to!"

"Then permit me to give you one of the most beautiful pictures of their meaning by one of your own people."

"And you have come from France to show me what I should have found before you came!" answered Hester, smiling.

"Do not desire to deny me the pleasure of offering you a few sentences from one of your own writers, mademoiselle: —

The crimson jasper that lies at the beginning is the color of passion, suffering. Out of the crimson we climb into the blue of the sapphire — that is truth and calm. Beyond is the glistening white chalcedony of purity. And next flashes out the emerald's green — the hope of glory.

Then they mingle and alternate — the tenderness and the pain and the purifying; the veined sardonyx reveals that — the life story; the blood-red sard is the sixth gem — the whole triumphant love that contains and overwhelms all passion — the intense blessedness with its included anguish. It is the middle band — the supreme and central type; crowning the human and underlying the heavenly.

Then the jewels grow clear and spiritual: chrysolite — golden green, touched with a glory manifest; the wonderful sea-pure beryl — that blending of the rarest, serenest blue; then, the sun-filled rapture of the topaz; next, the chrysoprase, where flame and azure find each other — "the joy of the Lord," and "the peace that passeth understanding." And last, the purple jacinth and the violet of the amethyst, into which the rainbow refines itself at its close — a dream of far-distant, ineffable beauty.

"Oh, thank you!" was Hester's only response. But Monsieur de Rosambert had seen in her expressive

face each thought-picture clearly reflected as in a mirror.

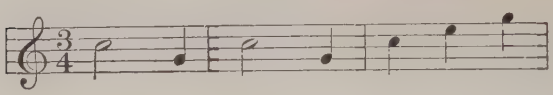
"In the Revelation," said Hester, "One is faintly shadowed — 'to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.' Does not that sentence suggest the hidden meaning of the gems?"

"Your writer agrees with you: 'The wall of jewels was an alphabet; it gave the key to the whole radiant language. Without such key to its types, no wonder persons puzzle over the Apocalypse! Read the aspect of the Son of man, "like unto a jasper or a sardine stone," as the fervent attesting colors of suffering and love, and how full the divine face and presence are, though so briefly suggested!'

"I like to believe that not only is it natural for me to love color, but that I was meant to understand and enjoy one of God's divinest gifts to his creatures; he wished me to understand and appreciate it!"

"Never doubt it! Earth, sea, and sky overflow with hidden treasure to broaden, deepen, and enrich every hour and moment of the day. The depth of the sky — how should we know it without the blue? The rest and the shadow of the earth and the great trees — what would they be without the green? Look at the azure above us and the broad, cool shade from those old drooping hemlocks along the shore. And listen!"

Monsieur de Rosambert rested on his oars. A bird was singing amidst a clump of silver birches: —



Oh, the deliciousness of those notes, repeated again and again slowly, sweetly, and clearly!

"'And the bird shall be my harper in the dream-hall I have won,'" quoted Hester, enchanted with that never-before-heard song, its lovely cadence nestling in her heart and dimming her vision of sweeping hemlocks, silvery birches, and sparkling wavelets softly curling and breaking on the shore.

Once more the music floated from the forest; then there was a fluttering of the foliage and on tiny russet wings the small bird flew away.

"Its message given" —

"Just what I was thinking!" exclaimed Hester. "It has faithfully, truthfully sung what it was pledged to sing. Oh, to be thus loyal to every slightest and greatest trust committed to us! What a row this has been to me! I have learned the meaning of the beautiful gems; and then there was that lovely new song and the associations and memories it will always carry."

The heavy weight Basil's note had thrown on her heart was gone.

"It is well to be thought lost by one's friends, sometimes, Monsieur de Rosambert," she said, her face beaming gratefully for all the pleasure of the

past sunny hour. "Believe me, I am forever indebted for all your boat has brought me."

"And I am too happy" — eagerly answered Henri de Rosambert; then, checking the impetuous words thronging for utterance, he shipped his oars, saying quietly: "At last we have reached Bar Harbor, mademoiselle! To prove me trustworthy, pray accompany me to Miss Conway, Madame de Chavigni, and Gudule."

CHAPTER XI.

BORNE BY THE SEA GULL.

"AH, little wanderer, how alarmed we were!" cried Gudule, linking her arm in Hester's when the two elder ladies had welcomed her. "Henri's arrival alone relieved our anxiety, for he promised to discover your retreat and restore you. See what a pile of letters I have written since you deserted us!"

"To your Parisian friends?"

"To my mother and those for whom we have been so busy in that happy work. They care to be remembered from far-away Amérique; and I can sometimes write more consoling words than I can speak. Is it so with you? And then, those children! You have not heard of Henri's lovely Home some miles south of Paris, for the little neglected ones?"

"No."

"My brother said that to save them he must take them quite away from their evil, unwholesome surroundings. He purchased a very large, airy, fine old residence and then secured a matron, nurses, teachers, and many servants. Several hundred boys and girls are at this moment in that sweet, pure air learning what is only good and noble."

"What a beautiful charity!" exclaimed Hester.

"Is it not? And how they love him! When he arrives it is always a fête for the little children. They

have their garden, playground, and library; also, a chaplain, who gathers them around him morning and evening and conducts the pleasant Sunday service. Ah, my brother — but I cannot tell you half he is! To-morrow is his *jour de fête*, as we say in France; his 'birthday' as you name it here. Cannot we make him a surprise? a special pleasure? Cannot we hear some fine music? Bar Harbor is at its fullest, Miss Conway tells me; but it is not of the gay society I think or care; one finds that everywhere in summer time. I would like a sail on the sea, or to go up some mountain with a beautiful view, a drive or a walk of which we know nothing."

"Let us consult Miss Conway; she knows Mount Desert so thoroughly."

In the middle of a conference Jack Bolton came with an invitation from Bayview for the next morning.

"A Russian gentleman and his little daughter are with us whom we met in Paris two years ago. Madame Viazemski was then dead, and Olga is never seen apart from the count, her father. She has brought her Russian nurse too — Marfa. They entertain me all day long. The little one speaks French and English as fluently as her own soft, sweet, odd tongue."

"So Henri's *jour de fête* is arranged for him," said Gudule, as at eleven the next morning Miss Conway, Hester, Madame de Chavigni, and the De Rosamberts entered picturesque Bayview, its blue and white awnings fluttering in the breeze, its charming rooms

fragrant with roses. The grand piano was open; a gentleman distinguished in face, manner, and bearing was arranging some music on its rack; at his side stood a lovely girl of eleven — her blond hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion proclaiming her a true little daughter of the North — oblivious of all the room contained save her father.

Conversation and exquisite music filled the morning so delightfully that Gudule confessed no prearranged fête for her brother could have conferred greater pleasure; and when, after luncheon, the Sea Gull was suggested as ready to bear them forth to the beauty of sea and shore, her contentment was complete.

Madame de Chavigni and Miss Conway, standing on a grassy bluff in the grounds of Bayview, watched the departure of the little party, promising to await their return at the cottage.

The pretty, empty house suddenly seemed sad to Miss Patty, who sat down at the grand piano, not to play classical music, but some of the dear old-fashioned, rarely heard sweet Scotch ballads she used to sing when a girl at home. "'The dear, the brief, the forever remembered' — what days those were!" Miss Patty thought. Not one beloved face or voice now left to greet her of all those who sat near her when she sang! Then she remembered Hester and her heart overflowed. She seemed dearer and nearer now than any one else to the lonely old heart. Why should not the young girl live with her? How she would brighten and fill the large, handsome residence in New York, that seemed so desolate to Miss Patty!

Then, when the time came for her to pass away to her rest, Hester should inherit all she possessed. It was a sudden daydream of joy, such as Miss Patty had not known for years. Hester was the first young creature who seemed like her own kin — alas! all gone. Miss Patty ceased playing, so interested and excited was she in her beautiful air castle; and she resolved it should be no building so unsubstantial, but a happy reality. She recalled what she had heard in the city of young Wilmerding and his wild, reckless habits, which unfitted him for the guardianship of his lovely sister. Then she joined Madame de Chavigni on the veranda, from which they could just catch the white wings of the Sea Gull gleaming in sunlight as she glided farther and farther from Bar Harbor.

"Such glorious weather to sail away in!" Hester was thinking, while Miss Patty was lovingly, tenderly planning her future.

"The blue of the sky and the blue of the sea so wonderfully reflect each other," said Henri de Rosambert, seated beside her.

"And the yacht floats as lightly and easily as a bird! Your fête day is a great success, Monsieur de Rosambert."

"You have not given me your good wishes, mademoiselle."

"Pray believe they are most cordial and sincere."

"As I glance back at the twenty-eight years, they seem but a month, a week, a day. And so much to do — so very much, when rest shall have

prepared me to resume my happy work with fresher energy!"

"Yours is a full and noble life. Oh, if" —

"If?"

"I wish you to know my brother — to help him. You do help every one, don't you?"

"Where is your brother?" answered Henri de Rosambert, instantly responding to the wistful, childlike trust of the appeal.

"In Bar Harbor nursing a relative who is ill. Basil — Basil would rather not have it mentioned."

"I have forgotten it already, mademoiselle! But to minister kindly to one who is ill is very commendable."

"Yes." But Hester's face expressed pain and her companion saw she was not happy or at rest in the knowledge.

"When we meet, trust me to do all I can," he returned, in so earnest a tone that her burden of anxiety seemed suddenly lightened. With such a friend — a real friend — as Hester knew Monsieur de Rosambert would be if he gave his friendship to her brother, from what might he not yet save Basil? Oh, if she could only confide all her perplexity and ask his opinion and advice! But this was impossible; so the brave heart controlled the impulse and the sweet lips were mute when she would so gladly, thankfully have spoken.

The Sea Gull was now passing Schooner Head and Spouting Horn. There was no chance to enter Anemone Cave, for the Atlantic was joyfully tossing great

GREAT HEAD.

buoyant waves far into its recesses to the rapture of each exquisitely tinted dweller in that cavern of the sea.

Farther south, rose Great Head in its giant strength, confronting the wild waste of tossing waters that boomed and broke so harmlessly against the savage grandeur of the precipice; while westward, in startling contrast to this lofty, rugged cliff, lay the pretty, smiling meadow, fringed by the shining sands of Newport Beach. Just beyond, the mighty organ hidden in Thunder Cave's deep chasm was responding in tremendous tones to the monstrous billows playing on its bass keys and trampling on its pedals with the reckless abandonment of an exultant, unspent force. Still further southward beyond a stretch of broken, curving shore, the Otter Cliffs soared suddenly sheer and straight, dark and stern against the dazzling blue of the summer's sky. How still, how grand, how strong they were to meet the gales that rave and sweep around their summit and the thunderous roar and immeasurable might of the roused Atlantic at their base!

The Sea Gull veered and spread her wings toward Bar Harbor. Olga Viazemski, nestling against her father, watched now the shore and now her companions, weighing them in the balance of her child's quick fancies. Jack Bolton, ready to tease, and seeking an opportunity, found none; the little Russian resolutely ignored his attempts at conversation. She instinctively felt him to be antagonistic, and wondered how Miss Nelly could smile when he addressed

her. Toward Monsieur de Rosambert and sunny-faced Gudule she glanced approvingly; had she been less shy she would have delighted to ask them many questions concerning the sea and shore and sky. Hester charmed her; how lovely was her face, how graceful every movement! Why had Madame de Chavigni not accompanied them, and kind, winning, old Miss Patty, to complete the group? The beautiful profile of the Creole lady had fascinated Olga's vivid imagination; it was the face of one she had met only in dreams. Mrs. Bolton, Meta, and Miss Forbes were unnoticed; there was not one line in either face to arrest her attention or captivate her fancy.

Crimson clouds were beginning to reflect themselves in the tranquil sea's blue mirror. As the sun descended, white sails glowed a rosy lilac and the curving crest of each slow wave burned with ruby fire. When moonlight frosted the islands, gleamed on the bay, and silvered the woods, cliffs, and mountains of Mount Desert, the Sea Gull glided back to her own quiet harbor, where a gala tea at Bayview awaited those she had borne so lightly across the shining sea.

"If you were sleeping, would you care for that, Jack?" asked Henri de Rosambert as he was returning to the hotel that evening.

In mid-heaven beamed the moon, a broad belt of dazzling silver resting dreamily on the bay.

"What can a sleeper know of the exquisite transfiguration of the dawn shining on the hills, or the radiance of such a perfect night as this? But waken

him, and his heart exultantly responds to the lovely vision."

"Am I asleep?" asked Jack, understanding the significance of the question and its relation to the Beleaguered City. "Then blessed be slumber! I am happy and contented as I am."

"Pardon me for having interpreted your face more than once to-day. Remember, I too have been a lad and know well the thoughts and doubts that pain and weary you. Let me help you, if I can."

With a hand clasp firm and earnest, that Jack did not disdain, the two separated, the latter reluctantly yet loyally reading for ten minutes as he had promised, wondering whether Helen's little book, that awakened so much vexing thought, were most his friend or foe.

Sleep carried him to the banished ones outside the old walled city of Semur, where, with a broken heart yearning for reëntrance to its quiet, peaceful streets and the tranquil, holy shadow of its stately, beautiful cathedral, he listened to the celestial voices floating above the ramparts with their pleading — "Do you now believe? Do you now believe?" With a choking sob and a thrill in every nerve he cried: "I do! I do!" and found himself within the ancient cathedral chanting the grand *Te Deum* among a rescued, weeping, overjoyed multitude of men and women and little children such as he could never, never number!

When he awoke, Jack seemed to have lived years since Henri de Rosambert's last question.

CHAPTER XII.

OLGA VIAZEMSKI.

COUNT VIAZEMSKI was obliged to visit Washington before the arrival of the Russian minister at Bar Harbor, and during his brief absence he entrusted his little daughter to the special care of Helen Armitage, in whose companionship the child had manifested deep delight. It was marvelous to witness the self-control of the little golden-haired Russian when told that she could prove her love to her father by quietly remaining at Bar Harbor, obedient to each request of her hospitable hostess and her young niece.

Long after Count Viazemski left Mount Desert she remained crouched in one of the shaded bay windows quite still, her face pale, her lips mute. Suddenly she spoke to Nelly, who, all sympathy, was longing to console, but afraid of aggravating her suffering.

"I have lost my pencil. Will you lend me yours?"

"With much pleasure. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"No; thank you."

Crouching again on the wide window seat, Olga opened her writing case and proceeded to write a letter. Page after page she covered with Russ, its written characters so similar yet dissimilar to our own that one is deluded and nonplused at every line. Sometimes tears fell on the page; oftener the lips

trembled and no tears fell. After two sheets were filled they were folded carefully and placed in an envelope. Searching for an address in a corner of the writing case, Olga discarded Russ and traced clearly in English characters her father's name and the hotel in Washington. After she had stamped the letter, Nelly rang the bell, and a servant was dispatched to mail the loving, tender words that would so rejoice the fond heart of the receiver.

Jack entered the library; Olga at once gazed out of the window and in a few seconds sought another apartment where she had seen a glass pipe of curious device lying on the sill of one of the broad windows. She had noticed Jack blowing gorgeous soap bubbles the day before — noting the prismatic effects, for a paper which he was writing.

Without one word Olga seized the delicate pipe and flew to her bedroom, where her maid was sewing.

"Into the basin — quick! some water!"

Marfa obeyed.

Dashing the soap wildly to and fro, Olga soon had a mass of frothy waves. Filling the pipe, she leaned far out of the window, launching a transparent globe painted with most lovely hues into the sweet still air.

Jack, strolling about the grounds of Bayview, glanced up to behold his peculiar property in the slender hand that had often before played havoc with his belongings. With a bound he sprang up the staircase, down the long gallery, and with scarcely a knock rushed into the apartment, where the pretty bubble

blower, quite at her ease, was refilling the fragile crystal pipe.

"You mischievous Russian monkey!"

Olga vouchsafed no response.

"You 'll break that pipe, I tell you! Come; give me my pipe."

"Wait."

"I'll give you such a fine clay pipe — white as snow."

"I don't care for your clay pipe. You may blow bubbles from the clay pipe."

"Will you obey me?"

"No."

Jack seized the little Russian's hand.

"Let it go!" cried Olga, her blue eyes flashing.

"Not until you give up that pipe."

"I won't give it up!"

"You shall."

"You have pinched me! There — see your pipe!" dashing it into fragments against the window sill.

"You little vixen!" exclaimed Jack, taking refuge in flight from a strong inclination to shake his companion.

Marfa rose in great agitation. She was ashamed that her beloved charge should thus have demeaned herself, and began a voluble lecture in Russian on the lamentable events of the past few seconds.

Olga turned her back and catching up some paper and Nelly's pencil proceeded to draw what she called "pictures." Certainly her lines were very slanting, but it was a house she had produced, with an abundance of casements all out of the perpendicular. A

remarkable beast stood at the door of this residence, on which a figure was gracefully mounted in the same sloping manner.

Helen entered the apartment. Olga presented her sheet of paper.

"What is that, Miss Nelly?"

"You meant it for a house."

"Yes. Is n't it a good house?"

"Might n't it be a little straighter?"

"No."

Nelly restrained a smile, waiting seriously for the next question.

"What is that at the door?"

"I don't know."

"Yes; you do. You have them in your stable."

"Then it must be a horse."

Olga nodded.

"Who is that on the horse?"

"I — I can't quite discover," replied Nelly, concealing a smile behind her handkerchief.

"It 's I — Olga Viazemski!"

"Is it?" Then Nelly's merriment could no longer be concealed.

Olga, though on the verge of another passion, refrained from all manifestation of wrath. Perhaps the recollection of the shivered pipe calmed her; she was momently anticipating the return of Jack accompanied by his mother.

"Have n't you something to tell me?" finally asked Nelly.

"No."

"What have you been doing since you left me in the library?"

"Playing."

"Playing?"

"I have been playing with soap bubbles."

"That's a pretty pastime; but the pipes Aunt Bolton ordered yesterday have not arrived."

"They're not so slow in Russia!"

"With what pipe did you blow bubbles?"

"I took — yes, I took," stamping her tiny foot, "Mr. Jack's glass pipe; and I smashed it — see? there against the window, after he pinched me."

"You used his pipe without permission?"

"Yes."

"Are you not sorry you broke that pretty crystal pipe?"

Graceful vines clustering round the window were casting silver leaf patterns on the carpet. Olga traced their outline with her foot.

"Are you not sorry?"

"No; he pinched."

"But that was such a pretty pipe! It came all the way from Paris wrapped in fleecy cotton — a gift to Jack."

"Did he cry — to-day?"

"Big boys do not cry; but they are sorry."

"Oh, it made beautiful, beautiful bubbles!" looking up at the sky.

"And you broke it."

Olga bent over the leaf shadows silently, but her lips trembled. Presently a large tear dropped, then

another and another. In an instant she had thrown herself face downward on the floor, sobbing.

Nelly, full of compassion, sought to lift her.

"Let me be! Let Olga Viazemski be!"

"I know you are sorry, my dear little Olga."

"Oh, can't I buy Mr. Jack another pipe?" suddenly springing from the floor to rush for a more than well-filled portemonnaie and emptying its contents into Nelly's lap.

"That is all mine. Papa gave it me."

"Would you not rather earn the money? To send for a pipe the breaking of which caused another regret and that you can easily replace with no effort of self-denial" —

"Oh, is that what you mean? Papa often speaks thus: 'Olga, thou must never give that which costs thee nothing. It is not generous, my little darling.' But how can I earn money?"

"I 'll give you a poem of Whittier's to learn."

"And I 'll put a *rouble* — what do you call it in America? — in this pretty little leather bag for every verse;" and away she flew to find a small bag of sweetly scented Russian leather lined with pale green satin.

"But a rouble is worth seventy-five cents of our money; that is too much. You would earn the pipe too easily."

Olga laughed. "Then let me drop in a kopeck!"

"Less than our cent? That is too little. Place a silver dime in the bag for each verse you recite with taste and feeling."

"'Taste and feeling'! Oh, could I? But I'll have bidden good-by to Bar Harbor long before I've earned enough to buy such a crystal pipe! Did you see that small dragon sitting on its bowl?"

"Yes. All depends on how industrious you are. But first, you broke the law of love in destroying Jack's property."

Olga seemed puzzled. "It was not right?"

"Why was n't it right?"

"The pipe did not belong to me."

"No; it was your neighbor's. How should you love your neighbor?"

"I don't know."

"What is that little book yonder?"

"A copy of the Gospels in Russ. But I can read them in English too; papa taught me. Did you know Russians learn every language easily?"

"I have heard so."

"It is the truth — a gift, papa says. Can you speak Russ?"

"No; I wish I could."

"Every one says it is so hard. To us it is so easy, so easy!" laughing and opening the small volume to which Nelly had referred.

"Is it in this book I'll find about my neighbor?"

"Yes. Look at the tenth chapter of St. Luke and read me the twenty-seventh verse."

"You'll not understand!" cried Olga archly, and then read the verse.

"Mr. Jack is my neighbor. Is that what you wish I had remembered? My neighbor whom I am to

love as I love myself. Then I should not have broken his pipe. Did he not forget I was *his* neighbor when he commanded me to lay it down and then — pinched me?"

"Doubtless," laughed Nelly. "But you are only responsible for your share in the afternoon's mishap."

"Now I understand. Please show me the poem. Forty-six verses in 'My Soul and I'! Can I remember forty-six verses and recite them with — what did you say? — 'taste and feeling'?"

"Try!"

"I'll try. I must buy another pipe; Russians are always honorable, you know."

Olga's merriment melted into a sweet seriousness as she read the opening verses of "My Soul and I." There needed no further indication that, though so youthful, she would recite Whittier's poem in full sympathy with its thoughtful beauty.

A week later Jack was translating several pages of tough Latin, his pen often pausing in its journey to the little silver owl that served for an inkstand. He was thinking more than translating.

Olga ran into the room, her little Russian bag in her hand. How gayly it jingled!

"What is in that bag?"

"Can't you hear?" was the laughing answer.

"Is it money?"

"It is money."

"Who gave you that money?"

"I earned it."

"You!" and Jack laughed merrily.

"Can't I earn money?"

"You 're too much of a sprite."

Olga's eyes darkened with anger and her cheeks flushed.

"How did you earn that money?"

"I 'll not tell!"

"It 's time you answered a civil question."

"What is 'a civil question'?"

"Don't bother me? Don't you see I 'm writing?"

Olga gazed at her little bag. The money in it she had honestly earned by industry and self-denial. The sun and breeze had often wooed her to seek them on the shore and she had resisted both, to learn another and another verse in that long poem for the sake of that disagreeable boy! Suppose he never again possessed a beautiful crystal pipe — how immaterial! But the generous impulse and honorable instinct triumphed; she wished to restore what she had broken. Approaching the table, she earnestly gazed at Jack. He had a pleasant face when he was quiet.

"Travel off!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, what is that!" admiringly regarding the silver owl. "What a beautiful creature! What yellow eyes! In Russia I have a stuffed owl as white as snow. He stands on the top of an ebony piano and listens when papa plays."

"Give me what you have earned and perhaps I 'll give you my owl. I bought him in Geneva the day after we reached Switzerland."

"I'd like that owl; but I must buy something. I can't tell now."

Jack, to tease her, seized her bag, thrusting it into his pocket.

"Oh, you naughty, wicked neighbor!" cried Olga, bursting into tears. "See!" and with one stroke of her hand she upset the silver owl, to behold the ink streaming over books and papers and quickly gliding to the floor.

"I'll be even with you this time, you lawless little Russian!" exclaimed Jack, thoroughly exasperated. With one bound he dashed through one of the long French windows, Olga swiftly following.

"Oh, don't — don't!" she cried.

But even as she expostulated, she saw the little, fragrant bag flung over the cliff into the sea.

Pale with excitement and grief, Olga uttered not one word. Nelly came hastening from the cottage.

"What is it?"

"I have at last paid your little Russian countess in a coin she will remember!"

"He tossed my bag" — Olga hid her face on Nelly's shoulder, passionately sobbing.

"It is not possible, Jack!"

"It is quite possible, Helen."

"That bag contained money Olga has been patiently earning that she might buy you another crystal pipe."

"You don't say so!"

Nelly, remembering many a half hour which Olga had given to study, felt her heart throbbing and her eyes filling with tears. She embraced the trembling

child more fondly, whispering many tender, soothing words in her ear.

But the money was lost in the sea and the little bag lay there too! Olga refused to be comforted.

Jack strode up and down, excessively angry with himself, frankly admitting that his teasing had caused the upsetting of the owl, and caring more for Olga than he had ever imagined possible.

"Earning money to replace that pipe!" he muttered. "I ought to have given it to her long before; it was a plaything just suited to catch a baby's fancy. Poor little Russian!"

As Nelly and Olga disappeared, a sudden idea sent him leaping down the steep cliff path. He would restore that bag, if it were not in the depths of Frenchman's Bay! He was unfastening his boat to search along the shore, when to his delight he saw the little leather bag caught on a sharp spike of the rock, but far above his reach.

With energy Jack scrambled up and up, cutting his hands and bruising his limbs, but utterly indifferent to the pain.

Half an hour later he rushed into Bayview to find Olga leaning against a window, quiet and sad. Nelly was narrating a story to which she was not listening.

"Halloo!" he cried exultantly. "Do you know this?"

"Oh, my bag — my bag!" her blue eyes radiant as she rushed to receive it.

"Are we friends now? Will you shake hands with your neighbor?"

Olga's hand was at once extended.

"Promise me not to worry over that detestable old glass pipe! Buy something pretty for yourself — do!"

"I am sorry I upsèt your silver owl — very sorry!"

"I'll soon remedy that. You don't bear a grudge?"

"What is 'grudge'?"

"Since you don't know the word, I think you can't," replied Jack, laughing and flying away to change his coat, the sleeves of which had been torn and soiled in his rough scramble.

CHAPTER XIII.

THROUGH THE GORGE.

MISS PATTY was deeply absorbed in her plan for Hester's happiness and her own. She longed to talk with her and seized the opportunity when she had invited her friends to take the beautiful drive from Bar Harbor to Otter Creek on the southern shore, whence such an exquisite view of the sea, the charmingly rounded spurs of Newport Mountain, and the long slopes of Green Mountain are obtainable. No view from Bar Harbor is comparable to that from Otter Creek.

Another radiant morning dawned for the excursion, and Miss Patty, in as radiant a humor, filled the wagons, placing Hester by her side — the very touch of her affectionate old hand seeming to establish closer relations between them. Hester was sad and anxious; no note had come from Basil and she would rather have remained at Bar Harbor for the chance of its reaching her later.

The horses started, and they were off at the usual rapid rate of Mount Desert travel. In the pure and delicious atmosphere every feature of the island was etched in bold and clear relief. Sweeping over the lower ridge of Pemetic, whose lofty, sharp, and serrated crown cleaves the sapphire sky, they caught a glimpse of the picturesque, curving road to the

north, where crystal Jordan's Pond sparkles in its rugged mountain setting, reddens in sunset and darkens with shadows when floats over it the lonely cry of the loon. Three miles from Bar Harbor they entered the narrowest part of the Gorge — a deep and narrow valley lying between Green and Newport mountains.

At a signal from Miss Conway the horses were stopped. In the fragrant stillness could be heard the deep voice of the sea on the other side of the cliffs that walled in the ravine. Green and tranquil was the shadowy Gorge; sunlight bathed its tree tops, bluest sky gleamed through the rifts in the foliage whence floated bird notes of delicious sweetness.

"Hark!" exclaimed Miss Patty.

In "the silence that seemed to come from far and go afar" was heard the silvery voice of a cascade upon the mountain side.

Olga caught Nelly's hand in an ecstasy of enjoyment. Each listener, in his or her measure, responded to Nature's appeal as they had responded to the sunset on Green Mountain. On the sensitive face of Madame de Chavigni lay again that expression of mental pain. Hester saw it, and her heart throbbed with sympathy.

"'Each on his cross must hang awhile,'" she thought. "There is no evading the anguish that in one form or another is the fate of all. To what end? Does suffering invariably exalt, refine, purify? Does it not oftener crush, exhaust, or render desperate those who know there can be no escape?"

Monsieur de Rosambert turned to Hester as if aware of her painful musings and silently handed her a spray of harebells he had gathered when the horses paused in the Gorge.

Tears clouded her eyes as she gazed on the azure flowers and felt the sympathy that intuitively understood her mood and gently ministered.

The beautiful ravine was now behind and they were hastening to "The Cottage," where, descending from the mountain wagons, they entered the narrow path to the Otter Cliffs through a pine wood decked with long sprays of fantastic gray moss and carpeted with soft, velvety green. A bold rock towered in their path, half circled by lightning-blasted trees — a weird and lonely thing, haunting one's memory on a moonlit night. Thence out and on to the great Otter Cliffs, soaring sheer and straight from the restless Atlantic.

Hester bent over the edge of the grand headland and saw that it corresponded, only in a lesser degree, to Great Head, the curving shore between the mighty twain enclosing a bay, sparkling Newport Beach, and the hidden organ in Thunder Cave, played by the weird spirit of the sea.

Miss Patty clasped Hester's hand in hers.

"I have such a happy plan, my dear, for you and me," she said. "I have learned to love you, Hester — to depend upon you; to earnestly desire that, when summer is over, it need not part you and me. Do you share this feeling?"

"Oh, yes, dear Miss Patty! I shall be only too, too sorry to say good-by."

A SPUR OF THE OTTER CLIFFS.

"It is to avoid saying it that I now entreat you to promise to come to me — to make your home with me; to live with me always, dear; and after I have gone away, to still retain my home as yours. That is my wish — my most fervent wish."

Hester, startled and keenly touched, was mute.

"Do you like my air castle, dear child?"

"But oh, it cannot be! there is Basil. Had you forgotten Basil, who has no one but me?"

"You brother is too young to guard you, Hester; and — may I say it? — I fear too reckless. He has also many expenses. You know a sister, even if he loves you, and of course he does, is an additional burden. By coming to me you might relieve him."

Hester could have sobbed, so sorely did her heart ache. It was only too true; Basil was in no condition to incur a fresh expense or to assume a heavy responsibility.

"I never meant to burden Basil, dear Miss Patty. I have thought of a way, simple but certain, I hope, by which I can support myself."

"Never, while I live, nor afterward, shall you do that, Hester!" exclaimed Miss Conway. "I love you; it will delight me to take care of you."

Hester's trembling lips and tear-dimmed eyes revealed her gratitude.

"I cannot promise now, dear, dear Miss Patty," she murmured. "I must talk to Basil."

"He will never say you nay!"

Hester tried to smile; then, overcome, tears rolled down her cheeks and she turned away.

The harebells still nestled on the breast of her pale gray gown and attracted Madame de Chavigni's admiration.

"How delicately lovely they are!" said she, drawing Hester's arm through hers and walking slowly to and fro in sight of the great glowing spaces of sea and sky. Sails were drifting by and a large eagle floated majestically toward the Gorge.

Olga, perched on a safe spur of the cliff, between Jack and Nelly, was talking gayly. Gudule, Meta, Mrs. Bolton, and Miss Conway were debating whether they had better seek Otter Creek Cove on the other side of the cliffs, or ascend Newport Mountain. The party was summoned and decided on the latter plan.

Hester, at Madame de Chavigni's side, was noticeably silent. Miss Patty's unexpected proposition had overcome her. She, who had been so anxiously pondering what path to pursue, would be entirely relieved from perplexity if she chose to accept Miss Conway's generous proposition. Was it the will of God for her? How should she know?

The sound of a galloping horse was heard behind them and a lad from their hotel leaped down and handed a package to Monsieur de Rosambert. He was rewarded by a silver dollar and returned to Bar Harbor in a state of bliss.

Henri de Rosambert sought Hester, who was at the moment alone.

"Oh, a letter from Basil!" she cried, at once comprehending that she owed present relief from anxiety to the kind thoughtfulness of this new friend.

"How shall I thank you? How could you know I was longing for this letter?"

"A little bird whispered it in my ear; also, it was most necessary I should receive my own mail from France."

"One gift of kindness after another comes to me to-day;" and in the fullness of her heart she told Henri de Rosambert of Miss Patty's loving offer of a home.

"But your brother would never suffer the loss of your companionship!"

"He may be obliged to," answered Hester sadly. "It has not gone so well with him lately."

"Ah, I am grieved for you."

"And for him — for Basil be sorry too. I so wish to have you meet and help him! He would listen to you."

"Will his duties detain him much longer?"

"I cannot say; perhaps this letter may tell me."

The party was moving on, and Hester, Madame de Chavigni, and Henri de Rosambert were mounting the easy ascent through the woods to the ledges. The forest was vocal with bird notes and fragrant with the balsam of firs and pines which the warm sun was wooing for the breeze. With sweet flashes of blue sea below them and azure sky above them, on they went to the top of Newport Mountain, that offered a fine walk across its long, flat ridge overlooking the two thousand feet of Schooner Head, down, down into the chafing sea. Far out, the Atlantic seemed to slumber, wearing its magic hues of purple, blue, and green; but beneath the precipice the power of this summer-

like sea was visible in the great waves that swept into the caverns along the shore, breaking and scattering in a million flakes of foam, and heard in the deep moaning voice that uttered itself forever in defiant exultation over its own tameless strength.

At the outer end of the ridge the friends sat down in sheltered nooks to talk and feast their eyes on the lovely, delicate outline of distant hills on the mainland, or the nearer panorama of sea and shore and fairy islands, round which curled and broke the blue-green waves in silvery foam.

Hester, who had strayed a little apart, opened her letter: she must catch one glimpse of life at Ullescliffe, whither her foreboding thoughts wandered night and day.

ULLESCLIFFE COTTAGE.

I thought the end was approaching last night. Grandfather had been very weak all day. At sunset he sank into an almost fainting condition. Dr. Duncan and I labored without pausing and finally were rewarded by a partial rallying. Several times he called faintly, in the most imploringly painful voice — "Lucy! O Lucy — Lucy!" then closed his eyes. If it were not remorse that wrote the lines on brow and mouth, I know nothing of the feeling! Suddenly he rose into a half-reclining posture: —

"Did you say, Fortescue, that Hester Wilmerding resembles her mother?" he asked me in so sharp a tone that I was startled.

"Yes, sir."

"Would you like to see her?" I ventured to respond after a moment.

"No! What is Hester Wilmerding to me?" Then, though under his breath, I caught the words, "Or her brother either!"

Now I know that he has recognized me. Why am I not dismissed if he is proof against my claim? I am much encouraged, and hope his aversion is lessening. Sometimes I think it would be wise for you to visit Ullescliffe unannounced, but Dr. Duncan says the shock might increase the heart malady.

Three hours later.—Grandfather called me and said: "I saw a locket dangling from your vest this morning: what is in it?"

I gave him one glance and knew that only the truth would content him.

"The miniature of my dear mother and sister."

"Please detach the locket and hand it to me."

I obeyed. He held it some moments unopened.

"You may leave me," he said.

I retired to the next apartment, from which I could see his chair distinctly. For a second or two he seemed to hesitate, to exercise a strong, almost painful control; then slowly he turned the gold locket in his hand and more slowly, almost reluctantly touched its spring.

Glancing at the sweet faces, he looked away, then glanced again and continued gazing. Presently large tears rolled down his cheeks and I heard him groan—almost sob in very anguish of heart. "Will he acknowledge me?" I thought, longing, yet not daring, to rush into the room; instinct whispered that he did not wish to own our relationship even then.

I saw him close the locket and drop it in his breast pocket. He called me.

"For the little time, Fortescue, let me keep it. Go and walk for half an hour; I do not need you."

But I did not obey. I only went out on the veranda and sat down, not willing to leave Ullescliffe, though his manservant was within call.

What do you think now, Hester? Will not grandfather relent? Will he not make a just restitution? May we not hope all will be bright in the future? I no longer forbid your mentioning where I am. It will be best—wise—to do so. B. F. W.

Hester mused. This letter contained more consolation than any that had preceded it. She was so glad, so glad that her grandfather had seen her mother's lovely face again! How many years the hungry heart must have yearned for that glimpse! She longed to go to him, though he was quite a stranger. For her mother's sake she felt toward him so tenderly, so

tenderly! It was not his wealth that she craved, but his love. And time was passing so swiftly! That night might bear him so far away that she could neither see him nor hear him speak. She sprang to her feet. Oh, if she could return to Bar Harbor!

Henri de Rosambert approached. He had seen Hester's sudden change of attitude and understood it.

"Cannot I aid you? Do allow me."

"If you could only hasten this party back to Bar Harbor! May I tell you? Oh, I must — and Basil says I may. It is my grandfather who is so very ill," she continued hurriedly, her sweet face flushing and her eyes filling with tears. "Basil writes that he is in a very critical condition."

"How he must long to have you with him!" Henri de Rosambert exclaimed involuntarily.

"No, no!" answered Hester. "He does not care for me. I only wish he did! There was a misunderstanding — he never forgave my dear mother's marriage."

"I understand," gently responded Monsieur de Rosambert. "We can return immediately, I am sure. There are two letters of mine that must at once be on their way to France."

Hester thrust Basil's note in her pocket while she watched Monsieur de Rosambert conferring with Miss Patty.

"You must return? Then we will all return," said she. "We have had a long, delightful excursion and it is quite time we were on our way to Bar Harbor."

A grateful glance from Hester rewarded Monsieur

de Rosambert, and presently the party was in motion. They drove through the Gorge where western shadows were long, and horizontal shafts of golden light irradiated trees and turf. Afar upon the mountain side was heard again the voice of the cascade mingling with the sad, deep monotone of the groundswell of the sea. Pale pink wild roses still starred the hollows. The breeze and the bright moonlight lured them to linger, but the horses could pause no longer and they rolled on in the direction of the shore and home.

CHAPTER XIV.

SAINT GUDULE'S LANTERN.

THE letters of Monsieur de Rosambert were answered with all possible dispatch and he soon came to escort Hester to the house of Dr. Duncan to inquire when she might venture to go to her grandfather.

Miss Conway, Gudule, and Madame de Chavigni were full of sympathy, for Hester had confided all that was possible of Basil's letter. On referring to its date, she discovered it had been written on Monday; this was Wednesday. What might not have happened since?

The warm hues of the sunset had faded in the west. In the east, amid some rosy clouds, still floated the moon that had beamed on them as they drove through the Gorge. Frenchman's Bay, no longer azure, spread toward the mainland a great width of soft gray, while on the horizon a golden gleam from the lighthouse on Egg Island quivered like a star. Some one in a boat was singing a melancholy air that affected Hester painfully. Monsieur de Rosambert saw the emotion and said gently: —

"No real evil is coming; only a good, a blessing you do not yet understand."

"'Only a blessing I do not yet understand'! Oh, what words those are! They are so full of rest and

courageous faith that I believe I am stronger already." Her face, glowing with a grateful smile, was lifted to her companion's and her steps involuntarily quickened and her heart beat more rapidly.

The dark cloud of apprehension had passed away when she reached Dr. Duncan's. He was leaving his office, but returned on seeing Hester and Monsieur de Rosambert.

"Your grandfather? There is a decided change for the better; but the softening I observed lately has unfortunately disappeared from manner, face, and voice. As Mr. Harcourt is now, he will refuse to see you."

"I am very, very sorry."

"Do not regret it, dear Miss Wilmerding. It would only pain you to be greeted coldly and harshly. I believe this mood will change and that he will soon send for you."

"Oh, do you think so?"

"Yes."

"Then I must wait with what patience I may."

Hester returned to the hotel, meeting Jack Bolton, who had rushed over from Bayview to borrow a book Hester had promised Nelly.

Receiving the volume, Jack returned to the cottage, finding Olga established in the library sewing for her doll, while the family were entertaining friends in the drawing-room.

Olga glanced from the bit of silk she was fashioning into a bonnet and saw that Jack was watching her.

This notice angered her at once, and she turned her chair farther from him.

He laughed teasingly.

"What is the name of that big creature across your knee?"

No reply.

"Do you call that article you are making a bonnet?" looking at the blue silk that now adorned the head of the costly wax doll upon which Olga was fastening some gorgeous bows of pink satin.

"It is a bonnet; and a very pretty bonnet," she retorted, forgetting to maintain a reserved and indifferent demeanor.

"If you 'll make yourself such an affair and wear it to church next Sunday, I 'll gladly rob my purse of the necessary funds."

No reply save the darkening of Olga's blue eyes and a lovely color mantling her cheeks.

This was what Jack wished to see — the mood he desired to provoke.

"Nelly told me," he blandly continued, "that you had been taking drawing lessons from her. I remember some remarkable specimens of talent when you first arrived," recalling with a laugh the rickety buildings and their mounted occupants.

"You don't believe in my drawings!" Olga cried hotly, jumping up for her portfolio. "I have had lessons and I don't draw tumbledown houses any more. See!" exhibiting a very picturesque cottage encircled by a lawn, on which were growing graceful bushes and two or three fine old trees. They were extremely well drawn, as Jack, much amazed, instantly acknowledged to himself.

"Well!" ejaculated Olga, waiting for a gracious commendation.

He did not reward her; an elevation of his eyebrows was his only comment and criticism.

She closed the portfolio with an energetic bang, exclaiming: —

"You're a very, very — Oh, I can't bear such a neighbor!"

This was what Jack was longing to hear, and he laughed delightedly.

"I do wish you would go away! Miss Nelly is coming presently to tell me a story and show me a puzzle."

"Let me hear the story and see the puzzle."

"No, no! You'll only tease."

"But if I am very solemn?"

"What is 'solemn'?"

"If you'll allow me to remain, I'll show you."

"Oh, I don't want you!"

"Where did you find that doll?"

"Papa and I found her in Brussels."

"What is her name?"

"Gudule."

"That is Mademoiselle de Rosambert's name!"

"Isn't it pretty? The cathedral is named after Saint Gudule, who was a Belgian countess."

"I know all about it; I have been in it."

"And do you remember the great windows — all purple and blue and crimson panes? and the figures? and the great oak pulpit? Adam and Eve and the angel with the flaming sword are under it; and above is the serpent holding the canopy, and above *it* — papa

told me this meant so much — the Virgin Mary and the holy Child, who is bruising the serpent's head with his cross."

"I don't remember — yes, I believe I do. But I only cared for the glorious colors in the ancient windows staining the stone pavement of the solemn old cathedral. It might be different now," Jack added in a musing tone. Then turning to Olga he asked: —

"What were you singing to Helen last evening?"

"I was singing to myself."

"All alone?"

"All alone."

"That must be dull."

"No."

"Sing it to me: it was something about 'a green hill far away.'"

Olga regarded Jack wistfully. She was wondering whether he would care.

"Do repeat it, if you 'll not sing it."

She hesitated a second and then, much to Jack's amazement, complied: —

There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where our dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

"What is the name of that hill, Olga?"

"Calvary."

"And the city?"

"Jerusalem. Papa has been there; all noble Russians go to Jerusalem. Do you know why the cross was not set up inside the walls?"

"No."

"It was against the law, Miss Nelly said."

"'Who died to save us all.' Every one, Olga?"

"Every one; if they ask him."

"Suppose they don't ask?"

"Then they can't care much!"

"Go on."

We may not know, we cannot tell
What pains he had to bear;
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

"Are you sure it was for us? — you and — me, for instance."

"Papa and Miss Nelly say so. They have shown me the verses in the Bible that say so."

"You are sure he died for me?"

Jack's eager gaze rested on Olga. Only to the child, who he thought would not criticize his words, could he speak freely.

"It must have been for you."

"But I have never realized it."

"What is 'realized it'?"

"Believed it."

"Don't you now?"

Jack was startled. The question was similar to that asked by those who had been sent in mercy to Semur.

"Perhaps I am beginning to. Is there another verse?"

He died that we might be forgiven,
He died to make us good,
That we might go at last to heaven,
Saved by his precious blood.

"I can't understand — can you? — why Christ should have cared so much."

"Because he loves us."

"Why does he — how can he — love us?"

"I don't know — unless because there is no one else to help us. I wish you would ask Miss Nelly."

"I would rather question you. Remember! you are not to mention to any one what I have said. I turn this subject over in my brain as I turn everything else; but I do not choose to be commented on."

"What is 'commented on'?"

"Talked about."

"I do not like that, either; and it is not polite."

"'He died to make us good.' How does he?"

"He gives his Holy Spirit to teach and help us."

"Do you ask him for that good Spirit?"

"Sometimes. I hate to be naughty! And yet — I'm not often anything but naughty. I must wish to obey more than — Oh, I can't tell you. Don't you understand?"

"Not exactly," answered Jack honestly.

"Then, perhaps, neither you nor I would have carried Saint Gudule's lantern two miles in the cold, dark winter mornings to light the way to the church at Moselle. Satan hated to see her go and blew out the flame in her little lantern; but the prayer of Gudule relighted it and she went on her way."

"That 's only a pretty legend."

"But it was meant to teach us how good Gudule was and what we ought to be."

"I don't care to go to church even when it is warm

and the sun shines; so I'll never overtake Gudule, you see."

"Because you don't wish to! I notice you always do just what you wish."

"Since when?"

"Since the moment I came to Bar Harbor."

"Are you tired, Olga?"

"No."

"Then finish the hymn."

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved,
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.

"Thank you."

Helen entered the room. Olga ran to meet her, asking in a low tone, "May I?"

"Now?"

"Yes; now."

"If you choose."

Away rushed Olga, returning in a moment with a long, narrow white box which she shyly handed Jack.

"I was sorry and I am sorry; but I give you another."

"What is it! O you child! You have not sent for" — opening the box and drawing from the soft, pink wool, a fragile crystal pipe. "I am really ashamed of myself! Thank you a thousand times, Olga! But now, to please me, you must use it to

send the beautiful bubbles floating over the bay and carry it to Russia, as a memento that we are good friends and 'neighbors.' Will you?"

"When I go to Russia it must stay here to remind you of me."

"I 'll never forget you, and some day you 'll see me in Russia, and then" —

Jack had walked to the end of the room and taken from a drawer in his own special library a carefully packed parcel. Untying the cords, he took out a very handsome inlaid ebony box. After adjusting the key at one end of the box, and turning it many times, he raised the lid, and lo! the sweetest, most fairylike music floated through the room and out of the open windows toward the sea.

"Oh!" cried Olga, thrilled and trembling with delight and amazement as one lovely melody succeeded another.

When the instrument stopped playing Jack closed it, asking her to examine its cover. On a small silver plate was engraved: —

OLGA VIAZEMSKI.
FROM HER NEIGHBOR
J. B. B.

"It is — Oh, it cannot, cannot be!" Olga gave the inscription another glance and burst into tears.

"Yes, it is; and it can be! Take it, Olga, and when you are in St. Petersburg let it sing to you of Mount Desert days and your penitent 'neighbor.' See, here is the key. Wind it up, that we may hear its voice once more."

Olga dried her tears, and, full of joy and gratitude, learned how to apply the key to her new treasure.

"Was the 'green hill far away' one of the poems you learned to earn the money to buy that pipe?"

"Yes."

"Thank you very much. I 'll always keep what cost you so much unselfish labor. It was hard work, was n't it? I 'm sure a beam from lovely Saint Gudule's lantern fell on you and inspired the thought!"

"It shone on your cousin Nelly, and she shone on me! Good-night — good-night!" and Olga Viazemski went to her room and fell asleep to the melodies of her beautiful gift, after beseeching for a big blessing on her "neighbor J. B. B."

Jack walked out on the grassy bluff from which he could see the bay softly gleaming and hear its waves breaking on the rocks below Bayview. Attended by stars, the moon still shone in the sky and a whip-poor-will's clear song floated from a clump of birches. Gazing and listening, he paced to and fro for an hour, then went up to his room and was seen no more till morning.

In a dream he beheld Saint Gudule bearing her lighted lantern along the dark Belgian road, softly singing, like Rolf of old: —

My Lord and God, I pray
Turn from his heart away
  This world's turmoil.
Oh, call him to thy light —
Be it through sorrow's might,
  Through pain or toil.

CHAPTER XV.

CAUGHT IN THE FOG.

THE sea was an undulating floor of sparkling sapphire. Monsieur de Rosambert declared that such a morning must not be passed on shore. Shortly afterwards Hester, Gudule, and he were on the Sea Gull on their way to Fernald's Point and Cove, near Southwest Harbor.

The sky was cloudless, and a soft breeze filled the sails and gently impelled them over the sunlit sea.

"Why are we going to Fernald's Point and Cove, Henri?" asked Gudule.

"Because it would be quite unpardonable to visit Mount Desert, my sister, and not see the haven that hid our French missionaries from the storm."

"When did they leave France, and whither were they going?"

"They sailed in 1613 to carry the gospel to Acadie — the new France of those days, the New Brunswick of to-day. Our Henri IV had granted the tract to Sieur de Monts. Later this nobleman transferred the gift to Madame de Guercheville, maid-of-honor to Marie de Médicis. Henri IV was then dead and Louis XIII enlarged the royal grant."

"Ah, that gives to this shore a feeling of home," exclaimed Gudule, gazing at the mountains of Mount Desert wistfully.

"While you and Mademoiselle Wilmerding rest on those comfortable cushions I will read a few sentences from a little book Miss Conway placed in my hand at parting: —

Madame de Guercheville, a religious enthusiast whose confessors were Jesuits, conceived the idea of converting the heathen who inhabited this, her western possession, and planting the cross in Acadie. On the twelfth of March, 1613, a vessel with forty-eight colonists and sailors and two Jesuit priests, Fathers Quentin and Du Thet, set sail from Honfleur for the coast of Maine. She was commanded by a French courtier, La Saussaye, and had also on board Henri de la Roche Guyon, a relative of the great Madame de Guercheville, the patroness of the expedition.

On the sixteenth of May they touched at Port Royal, when Fathers Biard and Massé joined them and the vessel sailed on, seeking the mouth of the Penobscot River. But heavy weather drove them close upon the land, the fog surrounded them, and after forty-eight hours of terror they found themselves beneath the cliffs of Mount Desert.

"Ah, the relief; but alas, the homesickness!" said Gudule. "And then" —

When the tide would permit, they landed and raised the cross amid prayer and thanksgiving, naming the spot Saint Sauveur, in gratitude for their escape from the storm. Visited by Indians, who had an encampment near, they soon learned of a more desirable site whereon to found their home — Fernald's Point.

Then came Argall, the English governor of southern Virginia, fishing for cod along the coast of Maine. Learning of the French colony, with cruel ferocity he swept away the priests and every vestige of the mission station. Du Thet was killed, Biard carried to the English colonies, and Massé and a few companions alone left to find their way to Port Royal, if it were possible.

"And our people came no more to Mount Desert?" asked Gudule.

"Not till the reign of Louis XVI. Miss Conway

promises to drive with us some morning to Hull's Cove, two miles from Bar Harbor, where we shall find the graves of the De Grégoires — descendants of that celebrated Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, who received the third grant of this beautiful island from Louis XIV in 1688. But now we must greet the familiar scenery of the shore, and Miss Conway's little book can await another hour."

Fernald's Point and Cove were full of interest; then they returned to Southwest Harbor, and a drive to White Beach, which Miss Patty had specially mentioned, was proposed.

Leaving the yacht, they were soon off the beaten road, entering one of those curving, fascinating paths winding on and on through a wood of birches and evergreens. Suddenly there was a descent from the level, and there, at the head of exquisite Long Pond, lay White Beach, gleaming in the sunlight. Shadows from Carter and Western mountains rested on the water. The absolute tranquillity of the scene, the remoteness of the lovely spot, the green of the circling forest, the azure of the lake formed an alluring picture of romantic grace.

While they were delightedly gazing, in a moment the light was obscured; a wind, rising far away in the lonely mountains, swept down with eerie voice to agitate the dreamy water. The trees moved uneasily, bending their great branches before an awakening, mysterious power they knew and dreaded. The party drove quickly back to Southwest Harbor, where they reëmbarked on the Sea Gull.

The radiance of the morning was gone. Clouds dimmed the sky, and an ocean breeze, searching and chill, drove them on rapidly. Dick Tenby, the skipper, was at his post, silent and preoccupied, encouraging no questions concerning the weather.

"She 's coming! Yes, there she comes!" suddenly dropped from his lips as there rose on their view the mighty, overhanging cliff of Great Head, the heavy, restless surge booming at its base.

Around the bleak precipice, on a level with the shore, the fog glided on and ever on, stealthily, yet with relentless speed. It was ghostly gray, creeping over the water, shrouding the outlying islands as it sped, and ever rising till the trees had vanished, then the cliffs, and soon the mountains. Thicker, darker, more sinister grew the fog, more wild and chill the wind, rougher the sea, till a gale was flying toward and around them, its strong wings widespread, its breath deadly, with never a rift in the vaporous mass that was pressing as a wall closer and closer to crush and suck them in. The Sea Gull seemed to float in space. Still darker grew the fog, and more sullen the thunder of the waves against the cliffs as she sped before the furious blast of the gale. Was the storm lashing them on toward the pitiless rocks, or would the whirling waves engulf them?

The Sea Gull's passengers were silent. All eye and ear, Dick Tenby stood motionless as stone, with one aim — to save the yacht and those upon her.

Monsieur de Rosambert, calm and collected, had spoken but once to his sister and Hester; but those

few words, reënforced by his own sincere composure, stilled all expression of nervous fear.

"The gale and fog can do naught against the will of God, 'whose we are, whom also we serve.'"

Wind and wave challenged this tranquil trust with the defiant voice of thunder. Denser grew the fog, colder the air.

"Saved! By God's help — saved!" was the sudden shout of Tenby when the Sea Gull was swept as by a miraculous power through the reefs into Schooner Head Cove, while the wild and savage din of sea and gale roared harmlessly behind her.

Hester and Gudule burst into tears. Dick Tenby drew off his cap as Monsieur de Rosambert rose, saying, —

"Let us return thanks to Him who has delivered us."

Suddenly as the wind had risen, so suddenly it veered and lulled. Spear-thrusts of yellow light parted and dissolved the fog, while diffusing their own radiant color. Little by little the ghostly gray became a filmy, golden gauze, floating aloft that the perfect blue of the summer sky might beam unchecked on snowy surf and tossing wave fast calming after the wild sweep of that wide-winged gale.

In another hour the Sea Gull had floated into Bar Harbor.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME DE CHAVIGNI.

IN the sky there were now only dim reflections of the glorious sunset that had been. The moon had risen and Bar Harbor and the sea smiled in the silvery transfiguration. Hester was with Madame de Chavigni. But long after Hester was refreshed and rested from the excitement of her encounter with the fog and gale, the Creole lady continued to suffer from the anxiety that had shaken her self-control. Unable to converse on ordinary topics, she sat by Hester, gazing on her as one reclaimed from deadly peril.

"O Hester! Hester! if that yacht had been dashed and broken against the cliffs; or if the sea had engulfed her! My dear child, I — Hester, I must confide in you to-night. I have long been aware that you felt for me; and I have thirsted for your sympathy. May I tell you the story of my life?"

Hester's response was to clasp tenderly the trembling hand which Madame de Chavigni had rested on her knee.

"You know my home is in New Orleans, where the summers are tropically warm. To pass three or four months elsewhere is an annual necessity. By a chance — shall I call it a chance? — some friends were going to one of the charming outlying islands in the Gulf of Mexico — Last Island. That decided our

summer's plan. My dear husband, my child, and I departed thither, accompanied by Judith and other servants. We anticipated so much in delightful intercourse with our friends; but above and beyond all, in being together in so exquisite a spot."

Madame de Chavigni was silent for many seconds.

"Beautiful was the myrtle-shaded village on the western end of the island; more beautiful the sea and sky. The large hotel and its many cottages were filled with seekers after pure and bracing air — the most refined and cultured of our southern people. Every taste was gratified at Last Island; there were riding, driving and yachting excursions, fishing and hunting parties for recreation during the day, and music and other diversions for the evening. The days were too short, the moonlight nights too lovely for repose. Day succeeded day of most perfect weather and as perfect happiness. How few can say they are happy, Hester! The most one dare affirm is: 'I am not unhappy.'

"July passed into August. The sky was cloudless, the sea tranquil, save for one phenomenon — the stirring of that quiet gulf with sudden motion one noon and then an oncoming billow that thundered as it broke upon the beach, succeeded by another and another till the sea was tumultuous — and yet no wind! At sunset a rosy cloud bridge spanned the sky, whose perfect arch deepened in tint with the dying day. Then from the northeast came the wind, which remained with us from that hour, while the waves rolled higher and higher and the moan of the breaking surf answered

the cry of the wind. An ever-increasing gale was sweeping over and around the island, the sea responding to its urgent voice in billows awful in their might — thundering, crashing, booming along the sandy shore. No moon now by night, and the sunshine pallid and spectral by day. I trembled with a nameless fear — so changed was the aspect of sea and sky, so dread the atmosphere."

Again Madame de Chavigni paused.

"The steamer Star, from Saint Mary's, was due on the ninth of August. It was our weekly messenger, bearing to us friends, letters, and newspapers from the outer world. No one believed she could reach us, yet all looked for her coming to that tempest-tossed beach. If she failed us! — A wild shout was heard — another — another! Then a voice cried, 'I see her! She is coming! The Star is coming!'

"The thronged hotel was all excitement, for the residents in cottages had hurried to us, alarmed lest their pretty summer homes should be leveled by the gale. All watched; but only those who had dared descend to that roaring, surf-tossed beach could descry the Star plunging through the breakers, almost hidden by thick, snowy spray. Oh, the hoarse triumphant cheers of the men, and the tears and laughter of the women when the Star, still rolling unsteadily, dropped her anchor in the foaming bayou in sight of our hotel! Never can I forget the roaring of that wind, the leaping of the spray — the crashing billows trying to tear Last Island from the sea! No gangplank from the steamer could be lowered. Fiercer,

darker grew the gale. A voice shouted that the cottages were tottering — moving in the vast and angry flood that was already sweeping half across the island! All the anchors of the Star were dropped to hold her in her place, yet she still dragged. We heard another shout as those watching saw the Star's stack, pilot-house, and cabins cut away and instantly lost in the bellowing sea! 'Only the hull remains — only the hull of the Star remains!' cried another voice. I could see her panting on, little by little, swaying and rocking nearer our hotel, which still withstood the searching, howling blast. My husband and child were with me in our rooms; Judith, Mimi, and Casper in an anteroom, mute and terrified."

Madame de Chavigni again was silent.

"In a rift between the awful blasts of the gale we heard music in the hotel's great hall — the music of the violins for the evening dance. I clasped my baby more closely and my husband's arm encircled me more tenderly. We seemed more than ever alone, with hearts too heavy, too awe-struck to listen to that music. But the dance went on and the wind and the sea raved and thundered, till in a brief lull we heard a sudden scream and the violins were dumb. Casper rushed to us trembling, gasping that the sea had risen so high that the ballroom floor was flooded! As he spoke a wild, unearthly shriek rent the air — a shriek from no human voice. It was the first cry of the hurricane, accompanied by the thunderous boom of monstrous billow following billow, till we felt the huge hotel waver and shiver

and crash in the deadly enfolding grasp of wind and sea!"

Madame de Chavigni paused in her narration.

"Oh, the terrible cries! the screams for help! the wailing of those who sought to save their dearest and found them not in the darkness and the flood!

"With dawn the wind sank. Then came the wreckers — the robbers of the dying and the dead. They fled away with their stolen treasures when the relief boat came from Saint Mary's. The reclaimed dead were tenderly coffined and the few living rescued by the superhuman efforts of the captain of the Star and borne back to their desolate homes. But those who had vanished to be seen here no more — for whom was no burial save in the sea! mine were among those —

"And I — a widow, childless — saved for — what?"

The mellow voice of the narrator had become lower and lower, the eyes more dim, the cheeks more deathly pale, the hands more cold, and the frame more tremulous.

Hester, with an irresistible impulse and a heart broken with sympathy and love for this beautiful sorrow-stricken woman, clasped her in her arms.

Constance de Chavigni shivered, then burst into a passion of sobbing, leaning her head on Hester's breast as she concluded her woeful tale.

All words were intrusive; silent sympathy was all Hester could offer.

The moments passed, Madame de Chavigni still leaning on the girl, clinging to her as to one of the

very few to whom she had ever been able to reveal her history. Miss Conway had gathered it imperfectly; and to Judith, who had shared her peril, she was still unable to refer to that awful night and morning when all joy vanished from her life.

"Hester, if I could only keep you always! Could you — would you come to me?"

"Ah, if I might! But there is my brother."

"Think of my loneliness. You would be all my earthly sunshine, Hester. Since my two were torn from me my heart has clung to no one as it does to you. Dear Hester, think of it, for my sake. You would care to be with me?"

"More than I can express," cried the girl softly, her whole nature melting over this wrecked life which she longed to warm and brighten by her love and devotion.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STORY OF THE GORSE.

MOUNT DESERT seemed an enchanted land to Olga Viazemski as she daily walked, drove, or rowed, learning more perfectly to appreciate its marvelous beauties.

Returning to Bayview from a sail on the Sea Gull with Hester and Gudule, she discovered the reason why her beloved Miss Nelly had refused to share her enjoyment, albeit so earnestly urged by Mousieur de Rosambert and Jack Bolton. She had remained at home to copy an intricate embroidery pattern for her cousin Meta. Olga found her in the garden, Meta bending over her shoulder.

"That's a facsimile, Nelly!" she was exclaiming approvingly, the frown of discontent over her own work vanishing as she surveyed her cousin's.

Olga caught a spray near and angrily stripped it of its foliage. What right had Miss Meta to burden her unselfish friend with a task so tedious and difficult? Nelly had put aside not only the sail but an interesting book to extricate Meta from her dilemma. Half an hour passed, then another and another; still Meta evinced no sign of relieving her from the irksome occupation. How could Nelly seem so interested? how could she cheerfully yield her own plans? how could she endure Meta's selfishness? Olga grew more and more indignant.

"Miss Nelly, where is your book?"

"What book?" asked Meta.

"The one she was reading when you brought that pattern. Dear Miss Nelly, are you not very, very tired?" she asked, rising and approaching the low seat in the arbor where her patient friend was chained to gratify the selfish whim of another.

"Not very. Is not this a pretty pattern?" uncovering it for Olga to see the very delicate tracery of stem and leaf.

"It's a horrid thing! I can't endure it!"

Meta hummed an air and sat down under a tree.

"Miss Nelly is very fond of reading!" presently said Olga with intense emphasis.

"Is she?"

"Don't you know she is? I — Oh, I can't understand how you can permit her to copy that hard, hard pattern for you! She is tired out — all out!" running over to Helen and snatching the pencil from her hand.

Meta sprang up then, and Helen bade Olga restore what she had taken.

"No, no! There, Miss Meta; take it!" tossing the pencil on the grass.

"You audacious infant!" cried Meta, provoked and longing to administer correction. "Come, trot away! Run out on the bluff and count the white sails. Helen is helping me."

"She is not helping; she is doing all the work, while you sing a song and don't care, and sit under a tree."

Helen laid her hand on Olga's shoulder, murmuring a few gentle words in her ear.

"No! If I go, you'll never come, Miss Nelly!"

"If you don't run away, Olga, I'll tie Helen here all the afternoon," said Meta, half laughing, but quite angry.

"To copy your big, ugly pattern?"

It was the work of an instant, but it was fatal. The costly, borrowed sheet was snatched from beneath Nelly's hand and torn into a dozen fragments. Meta in one bound had reached Olga, but too late. Pale and furious, she dashed her aside and the child fell heavily against a tree.

"O Meta! Meta!" cried Nelly, rushing to the prostrate little form that lay so motionless.

There was a quiver about the mouth and the eyelids flickered and again Olga lay still as death.

"I was not to blame, Helen!" cried Meta, her wrath subsiding; "she was quite unbearable! Have I really hurt her?" bending down to gaze at the lovely little face.

Helen was studying it with fast-falling tears. "Run into the cottage for Marfa. We will carry her in, Meta."

"I'll send at once for Dr. Duncan. Is it her head that is hurt?" and Meta, now pale from anxiety and remorse, took one more glance and then sped away.

It was a play! Olga, only a little bruised, could with difficulty refrain from opening her eyes and smiling away her beloved Miss Nelly's terror. If she did so, Miss Meta would not suffer punishment for her wicked conduct of that afternoon; and to punish her

was Olga's intention. Still, Miss Nelly must not be left in such a painful anxiety. The blue eyes slowly unclosed and she gazed up into the sweet face down which tears were dropping.

"Don't! don't!" gasped Olga. "Are you crying for me? Will you promise not to tell?"

"Yes."

"I am not much hurt!"

"Really?

"Yes, really. Miss Meta is strong, is n't she? My arm is lame and my shoulder; but — Oh, here she comes! Remember you promised not to tell."

"But I cannot act an untruth. Since you can rise, Olga, do so."

Olga lay mute, her eyelids closed, her whole form nerveless.

Helen whispered in her ear — "For my sake!"

"Don't!"

"Yes; for my sake and if you love me."

"If I love you!" sitting up with a jerk.

Then Helen rose and so did Olga. Meta, much relieved to see her standing, was about to say so; but Olga turned away her head as if the sight of her were intolerable.

"I do not need you, Marfa," said Nelly to the Russian maid, who, pale and apprehensive, was approaching with a bottle of liniment and some linen bandages.

"Are you in much pain, Olga?" asked Meta penitently.

"I might have died!" was the only response

as she leaned on Nelly's arm and refused to look at Meta, who ran back to collect her books and papers.

The sight of the tree against which Olga had fallen was now terrifying and hateful to Meta. As she thought of her absorption of her cousin's morning, a new light illumined her own act. It was unusual for Meta to feel dissatisfied with self — new and displeasing.

In Mrs. Bolton's cheerful dressing room Olga lay that summer evening, a huge pillow at her back and an immense Noah's ark on the table at her side.

"What beasts those are! and what funny little men and women!"

The ark had been Jack's gift. Coming in and seeing the child lying on the sofa, he had galloped fast into Bar Harbor to procure her some new amusement. The handsome stores on Main Street, filled with every attractive toy Boston or New York could furnish, were always an entertainment for Olga when Marfa escorted her for her morning walk; but the Noah's ark she had not yet possessed, that being a fresh importation of the previous day.

Her arm and shoulder were still stiff and swollen and it was with much difficulty that Olga lifted the inhabitants of the ark to her knee.

Meta, writing a letter, glanced toward her frequently, hoping for some smile or word of forgiveness, but she received neither: though when her head was turned aside Olga smothered a laugh in the sofa pillow. It was for Miss Nelly's sake she was thus obdurate. She

had noticed for a long time that Meta imposed on her cousin's unselfish nature. When she had returned to Russia and could no longer shield her dear friend, how Miss Meta would annoy and oppress that too noble disposition! It only remained, therefore, that she should teach Miss Meta a few necessary truths.

Meta being called away by Mrs. Bolton, Olga was momentarily alone with Helen. That beloved friend, kneeling down by the sofa and wrapping her arms around the child, gave most exquisite happiness to the little one she tenderly cradled. Nelly's sweet eyes were laden with love; but there was also a question hidden in them.

Olga, half laughing, read it. "Is it 'my neighbor'?" she asked.

Nelly's lips curved into a smile.

"I don't like her!"

"You ought to."

"Why?"

"Don't you know, Olga?"

"Because Miss Meta is your cousin?"

"There is a better reason."

"If you will sing 'There is a green hill far away,' perhaps"—

"You will confess to yourself the reason?"

Olga nodded.

Then Nelly sang.

"I know the reason," answered Olga at the conclusion of the first verse. "I am sorry; but I don't yet wish to tell Miss Meta I am sorry. She'll forget too soon! Can't I buy her another pattern? I could

never earn roubles for Miss Meta as I could for my real neighbor! I like Jack. I did not so much mind learning all those long, long verses for him. If I could draw the pattern! If it were only horses, houses, or dogs!" laughing merrily.

"Then you will like to see me helping Meta. I have drawn much longer than she has."

"If she does n't tire you."

"She will not."

"Here comes Miss Meta."

Meta entered to catch the smiling welcome of Olga's blue eyes; but as she approached the sofa the little Russian turned her head away. Had Miss Meta expected she could, or would, kiss her? There was one little corner in Olga's heart yet hard and unforgiving to Meta. Some voice whispered it in her ear and Olga seemed startled. No real forgiveness after all!

In Helen's eyes she read the same whisper.

"Read me something, Miss Nelly!"

Olga did not wish to think any more.

Nelly paused some seconds and then said: "I 'll tell you what was once told to me — 'The Story of the Gorse.'"

"What is 'gorse'?"

"A thick, prickly, evergreen shrub, that bears pretty golden flowers all winter."

"In the snow?"

"Yes."

"Tell me all about it."

THE STORY OF THE GORSE.

The brownies were supposed in the old times to be a busy, elfin folk who loved our race and were always doing men some kindness. They knew that they loved each other and often an earnest, loving kiss proved it. But looking out on the world they saw that the feeling of good and tender will they bore each brownie was not cherished as it should have been among mankind, for the happiness of the race to whom they ministered. So they sent out their message on the breath of the gorse, knowing if the shrub ceased blooming men would forget to give the token of heart-warmth that meant so much to old and young.

They planted gorse bushes up and down all over the mountains and covered the hills with the soft golden bloom. They set many of their number to keep constant watch over the flowers, and to water them carefully, so as to be always sure of having a little thorny amber spray of blossom somewhere. This was hard work now and then in winter; but the elves were so quick and watchful that the catastrophe they dreaded had never yet taken place — the forgetfulness to bestow and receive the loving kiss of peace and good will, because the golden gorse was no longer blooming.

However, there came at last one very hard, very snowy winter. Oh, how busy the brownies were! Besides having to look after the snowflakes and keep the robins warm and comfort the poor little children who had no fires, they had all this trouble with the

gorse. And it did n't like the snow at all. When it put forth its little yellow buds and saw the snow, it wanted to go to sleep like the other flowers. The brownies had to coax it to make it come out at all. Even then it grumbled and tried to prick the poor little elves, saying that a kiss of good will was a foolish custom and it would not encourage it! At last the gorse became so cross and unmanageable that every bit of it went to sleep in spite of the brownies, except one unselfish little spray somewhere up in the north of Scotland. This little spray was so afraid that there would be no gorse to bear to the world the loving, tender message of the elves that it would go on blooming as long as it could.

But it could not bloom forever; and the brownies knew it. How careful they were of that one little spray! How anxiously they watched the yellow buds opening out from their wee brown sheaths! How tenderly they guarded them from the rough wind and coaxed down to them the wintry sunshine! And what excursions they made over the moors to find just one more little sprig that should bloom before those gallant yellow flowers had faded away! But it was all in vain. The poor, good little spray could not help fading, though it tried hard to live.

The rest of the gorse was crosser than ever and thrust out its prickles when the brownies tried to reason with it and refused to let the tiniest peep of amber shine among its thorny green. At last all the tender kisses of the whole world were depending upon one yellow bud of gorse away up in Scotland!

It was the last bud of the dying spray. On Christmas Eve, a great snowstorm came whirling over the moors and tossed the little spray upon its windy bosom, tearing away the last bud from its mother-stem, sweeping it off across the hill tops — a tiny, golden flake of snow.

When Christmas morning dawned clear and white after the storm, the gorse was out of bloom and all the children had forgotten how to kiss one another.

Effie and Ronald had gone to bed without kissing each other. Never had the little sister and brother forgotten it before. When they awakened Christmas morning, their hearts were heavy and sad. Effie could not recall what was the matter. She wanted Ronald to forgive her for being cross on Christmas Eve, and she wanted him to — what *was* it she wanted him to do? She was sure *something* was needed to show that they were friends again! So she tumbled out of her little white cot and pattered across the landing to the room where Ronald slept. He sat up in bed when he heard her coming and held out his arms, and she tumbled right into them and laid her cheeks against his and held him close, and when they had both whispered, "I 'm sorry I quarreled!" they cuddled up together like two roses on one stalk. But still there was something lacking and Effie sat up and began to wonder about it.

"Ronnie, what do we do when we forgive one another?"

Ronald shook his head. "I can't think," he

murmured sorrowfully. "I know we don't seem to have forgiven each other properly."

"Suppose we shake hands?" said Effie.

"Very well," answered Ronald. So they shook hands in a very solemn, depressed fashion and then sat looking at each other like a couple of very wise and very perplexed little owls.

Nurse came in to wash and dress the children. When all was completed, she gazed at them wondering what else there was to do — something she always gave them before they ran away; but what that sweet something was, neither she nor they could remember.

Breakfast seemed unnatural that Christmas morning. Their mamma smiled sweetly and their gifts were many and beautiful — but she had forgotten something they always before had received and given on Christmas morning.

What that household missed, all the households missed; but they could not tell what it was. So they wondered.

What the world would have done that Christmas, or how uncomfortable it would have been, I cannot tell you, had it not been for a little ragged girl who lived among the big mills in Lancashire. In the twilight of Christmas Eve she went off on the snowy moors looking for some golden gorse to make a wreath to celebrate the dear Christ-child's birthday. She would have liked some of the bright green holly laden with scarlet berries which she had seen carried into the master's house, but no one remembered to give her a spray.

Humming over her sweet new Christmas carol,

she bravely plodded off to the moorlands and filled her pinafore with the little prickly green boughs of the gorse, that bore not one yellow bud for Christmas! Her fingers were torn and bleeding from their sharp prickles, but she worked bravely on — she must have a garland of something green for Christmas day.

The brownies watched her and heard her sing softly: —

Peace on earth, good will to men!

and were sure that somehow, they could not tell how, the trouble in the world would be set right.

Sitting down on the floor near the fire that Christmas Eve after she returned from the moor, and singing all the time, the little girl wove her gorse into a prickly wreath and then hung it over the chimney corner, gazing at it very thoughtfully for a minute or two. It reminded her of another crown — one of thorns — of which her teacher had spoken so earnestly the last Sunday. Then remembering that this was the time of Christmas joy because of Jesus' coming to earth to help and redeem mankind, she began once more to sing softly to herself: —

Peace on earth, good will to men!

The little mill girl slept soundly, for she had taken a long, long walk across the moor. It was a bitterly cold night and the gorse on the hillside had shut itself up tighter than ever. But the garland hanging over the chimney corner began to grow warm. It was near the fire and the cottage walls shut out the cutting wind. Warmer and warmer it grew and the

little frozen flakes of snow that had hidden themselves among the prickles turned into a warm soft shower like summer rain.

The brownies came to see how it was getting on, and when they beheld what was happening they sent in haste for all their companions. Very soon the kitchen was full of the elves all whispering words of tender encouragement to the gorse garland — for with the warmth and coziness, and the moisture lying about it, the little wreath was actually beginning to bloom! It could n't help it; it was so warm and comfortable in the chimney corner that bud after bud burst its brown sheath to know the reason of the change in the atmosphere. When once the buds felt the delicious warmth, they had no wish to go to sleep again, but bloomed larger and sweeter and yellower every moment. Listening to the brownies' softly sung Christmas carol, the dawn came smiling through the windows and fell on what seemed to be a great golden crown hanging on the wall; while all the elves sat in a ring underneath and wept tears of joy.

The little mill girl wakened too, and rose to look at her Christmas garland. When she saw the sweet golden crown she stood quite still. A far-away look came into her eyes as she stood on tiptoe to inhale the fragrance of the amber blossoms. Away went the elves, joyfully bearing the message that the gorse was blooming again!

Peace and good will!

they sang. The world believed them and suddenly remembered what it had forgotten. Friends and

children gave one another the Christmas kiss of love and peace.

"A merry Christmas!" cried Ronald to Effie with a hearty hug.

"A merry Christmas!" echoed nurse, stooping to embrace her babies.

"A merry Christmas, my darlings!" cried mamma, kissing each sweet face.

The cloud had gone and Christmas day was Christmas day at last.

"Did the gorse go on blooming after that?" asked Olga.

"Yes; ever afterward, although never more sweetly than the little mill girl's garland bloomed on that Christmas day of which I have told you."

"If I don't now" — Olga paused with a smile, "you 'll think the story of the gorse is nothing to me?"

"I shall be sorry to think it has ceased blooming," answered Nelly.

Meta again returned to the room. Olga extended her hand. "May I give you a kiss of 'peace and good will'? And will you forgive me — quite forgive me?"

"Oh, indeed I will!"

"And the borrowed pattern" —

"I have already sent for another."

"For which I will and must pay."

"No, no!"

"Yes, yes!"

"It is right Olga should, Meta."

"Very well, then; though I see no necessity."

"Now the room is full of gorse!" cried Olga.

"How sweetly it smells!"

"Gorse? I don't see any," said Meta.

"You carry a big bunch in your hand! Ask Miss Nelly to tell you the pretty story."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN DUCK BROOK GLEN.

"SO near Bar Harbor! It seems as if we must be far, far away!" exclaimed Gudule de Rosambert, as she and her friends entered the leafy glen where Duck Brook comes leaping and laughing down from Eagle Lake. Thence it speeds away from the mountains and over the rocks to sparkle and enchant those who wander, or sit down in the lovely dell to listen to its silvery song of gay good humor. There wild flowers bloom and ferns bend and wave. In the brook's deep pools trout dart and lurk. Mossy rocks line the bed of this mountain stream; maple, birch, and oak delight to overarch it; balsamic firs, larch, and spruce cast their shadows and distil their fragrance there. The steep, narrow path bordering the beautifully wooded hillsides of the ravine is often left to spring from one rock to another in the center of the brook, just for the sweet pleasure of being nearer the stream in its mimic waterfalls and snowy eddyings round a slippery bowlder. On the hillsides blackberry vines, lady's slippers, and pitcher plants gaze down on the flashing stream that has stolen away under their green clumps of foliage to fill the middle of that pretty glen with its song and laughter. It is an enchanting bit of woodland; and its nearness to the sea enhances its sylvan beauty and tranquillity.

Olga, quite recovered, was holding a balancing pole, emulating Jack and Helen, who were ascending the dell in the center of the brook, picking their way over the rocks and steadying themselves in a manner marvelous to the blue eyes of the little Russian. What Nelly attempted she must attempt; and she too must win the praise of her "neighbor."

Madame de Chavigni came on more slowly along the hillside path with Miss Conway and Mrs. Bolton. Meta, Gudule, Hester, and Monsieur de Rosambert strolled on just before them. Where the brook widened into its first deep pool they sat down. Some birches on either side gently bent their boughs across and dropped their flickering shadows. How still, how sweet, how ineffably lovely was the morning, the blue sky bending above them and the clear sunlight resting on the glen's fresh verdure!

Hester had risen and leaned against a birch tree while gazing up the leafy glen and smiling with many pleasant thoughts; then turned to see that Madame de Chavigni had a comfortable seat and was rewarded by a grateful glance.

Olga was watching Nelly, who grew dearer and dearer each day. The child had decided that her father must carry her to their Russian home to remain forever and aye! If she refused, Olga meant to refuse to leave America; and yet, how could she say she would never again see beautiful Moscow and Saint Petersburg? Monsieur de Rosambert was near her.

"Miss Patty told me of the children in your French

Home, monsieur. Do you sometimes tell them something pretty?"

The look and tone conveyed Olga's desire, though she made no request.

"On the last visit I paid before sailing for America, they gathered around me in farewell and — do you wish to hear what I told them?"

"So much; if" —

"It will give me pleasure," Henri de Rosambert answered, with so cordial a smile that Olga ventured to ask if all their friends might not hear what the little children in France had heard. So the party grouped themselves around her and she leaned back against a spreading beech wonderfully content.

It was often questioned why the subjects of a great, all-powerful King should suffer all manner of sickness, sorrow, and want, when he might by one word remove them into a glorious country where the sun ever shines in perpetual spring, and where suffering is unknown. But there was held before them the hope of attaining that beautiful land which had been forfeited by them all. Each of his people was appointed to test his loyalty, courage, and love of the things which he had commanded by running a race between the first and the final stroke of a clock. Each racer ran against time.

When I asked if it were difficult, an old man responded that it was not easy, because most of those who ran forgot to think only of the goal, and were often allured to pause and waste time on their way. But

the good, wise, and most loving King had so ordered that no one was expected to attempt what was impossible; every one might win the glorious country and the palace of the King if he only would! And he had solemnly promised that those who relied on the Prince, his Son, for strength and loyalty should win.

But alas! so many scarcely troubled themselves to run the race that had been set before them! Some began with energy and almost immediately fell away; some sat down to rest so often that they gave themselves no chance to reach the palace before the final, solemn stroke of the clock; some fell asleep and never roused till the sound of the bell fell on their ear.

On the occasion of which I wish to tell you, four children had begun their race at the same time. They were Cyril and Paulinus, Monica and Hilda.

Cyril was all life and fervency. His eye was bright; he had the energetic air of a young, fleet greyhound. Paulinus was clumsy and stout, and somewhat stupid. He did not care to run; he did not know why the necessity was laid on him to attempt the mysterious race. Monica resembled Cyril — all life and gayety; but Hilda, I noticed, was a poor timid little one who was afraid of herself and the race and of every one around her. She was sadly wishing for a word of encouragement and consolation. Suddenly a glorious spirit stood by each of the children to accompany them on their race; to cheer them and remove difficulties, if they were only in earnest to obey the loving commands of their King and Prince.

"Has each of these children the same number of hours in which to perform their race?" I asked.

"By no means. Each has his own clock. When that strikes, that one, whoever he or she may be, can run no longer."

I looked with deep interest on the four who started on their race at the same moment. Cyril ran so well, so uprightly, that in a few seconds he had distanced the others. The old man did not seem so enraptured as I hoped. The brilliant beginning appeared to him no evidence that Cyril would continue as he had begun.

Paulinus seemed to run well; but his pace was slow. Speed would not win the prize for him.

Monica glided along swiftly, when she did not pause to pursue a butterfly or gather flowers by the way. "Time enough — time enough," I heard her murmur when her guardian angel gently reproved her.

Poor little diffident Hilda was as awkward in running her race as she was in everything else she had attempted; but there was an earnestness in the child's efforts, a desire to do her very best, to obey absolutely the sweet and holy commands of her King, that touched me deeply. Her one thought evidently was to run the race set before her with patient determination, looking unto the Prince for grace and strength to persevere.

The ground on which Cyril had been running was soft turf. While he was on that he excelled the others. But presently he entered a ravine whose sides glittered with precious stones. Great cubes of crys-

tal shone gloriously in the sun; rubies as crimson as the snowy clouds under the setting sun; emeralds of as lovely a green as the young spring shoots; amethysts, the hue of the Michaelmas daisies; opals, burning with all the rainbow colors; and sapphires gleaming in the ravine as though a bit of the azure sky had rested on its rocky sides. Cyril was enchanted. I heard his guardian angel murmur, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Then Cyril ran on, to pause suddenly and knock off one gem after another, filling his pouch with their shining beauty.

"Did I not tell you," said the old man, who was compassionately regarding the boy, "that it is not those who start so bravely on their race of whom we are disposed to feel most secure? That poor Cyril is wasting his time and so weighting himself down that soon you will behold him lagging behind, unable to run with interest or energy. Besides, before he can enter the King's palace he must throw those jewels away. They are only the shadows of the gems he will receive there, if he is faithful here."

The angel had seized the hand of Cyril and set him on his way once more. He fled along the right path, but so encumbered was he with the precious stones that he suffered much in running the race to which he was pledged; yet it never occurred to him to cast aside the jewels which he so loved but which were so sorely impeding his progress.

Suddenly his eye was caught by an immense ruby burning just overhead. "Oh, I must and will have

that gem!" he cried, trying to wrench it from the rock. But his strength was insufficient and a stone was seized, with which I left him knocking and chipping the rock above the jewel, while his angel watched with a pained, sorrowful face.

I turned to find Paulinus slowly advancing over a dull, wearisome path. The sky was cloudy, the air sultry. Paulinus suffered from the heat. Presently he rested by the roadside and sank back overcome, discouraged, and so weary that he fell asleep, even while his angel was seeking to cheer and rouse him. Ferns pillowed his tired head and formed his couch. So comfortable were they after the tediousness of the road that though he sought once to rouse and obey the exhortation of his angel, resolution deserted him and he extended himself for more slumber, indifferent to the moments gliding by and the clock that might strike and suddenly end his probation forever and ever.

Monica was speeding along over pleasant, sunlit fields. The air was sweet with wild roses and the birds were singing for joy. Her girdle was adorned with flowers, her hands were full, and often she paused to gather more roses and to chase the pale amber butterflies, forgetful that her clock might strike and the goal be yet unwon. Her angel watched her most anxiously.

Then I looked for faithful Hilda. Whereas Monica had the summer season in which to run her race, Hilda had only the winter. Large tears were falling down her cheeks; her face was sad and her heart

distressed; but her purpose never faltered. If the loving King had thought it best that her race should be run in that inclement season, it was not for her to murmur. A steep hill rose before her deeply covered with snow. Overhead were pines in whose boughs the wind was moaning. No blue sky could be seen. The sun seemed to have forgotten how to shine. The child often plunged up to her knees in the snowdrifts, and I saw her shiver with the cold. Her guardian angel tenderly held her hand and threw his kind arm around her when the path was most difficult. Then I saw him present her with what seemed to me a cruel gift — a staff cut from a sharp thorn bush, jagged all over with spikes and briers, and bade her lean on that. Hilda obeyed trustingly; but soon I saw her poor little hand was torn and bleeding. Yet, wonderful to say, the more it bled the more courage and strength seemed to uplift Hilda. Her tears ceased to fall and presently she asked cheerfully: —

"Do you think the worst is over?"

"I cannot tell, dear child: that alone is known to your King. But this I know, Hilda: when the Prince was in this country he went over this same path, but the storm was worse; oh, so much wilder, and the snow so much deeper and the staff on which he leaned so much sharper!"

"I love to hear of the holy Prince. Tell me more of him."

Though the storm increased, the face of little Hilda beamed more radiantly as she hearkened to the history of her King's only Son, who for love of her and the

human race bore all the sufferings appointed him for their salvation, and came forth a glorious conqueror over all their foes.

Then I heard Hilda singing the *Gloria in excelsis*. Not the raving of the wind nor the increasing storm could drown the sweet voice or prevent my hearing the words of praise and thanksgiving that she sang: —

Glory be to God on high and on earth peace, good will toward men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee, for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Then I turned once more to Cyril, who had at last left his tempting, beautiful ruby, and was advancing on his way. He had cast aside many of the gems that had so heavily weighted him, and the angel wore a smile of hope.

Paulinus still slept on his fern bank. The angel seemed deeply distressed. I saw him gazing imploringly toward the King's palace, and knew he was entreating help to awaken his sleeping charge. And lo! clouds gathered in the sky, thick, black, and terrible. The thunder roared and the lightning flashed. Then Paulinus started from his sleep. Girding himself anew he started to run his race. While the storm

raged he seemed terrified and hastened on his way most earnestly; but as soon as it passed he resumed his slow, indifferent pace, and gazed around for another comfortable fern bank on which to repose.

Monica was still advancing, but she had gathered so many flowers to weave into a wreath that she had made many missteps and had had many falls from not noticing the path over which she was flying.

Hilda was far, far in advance of the rest. How so feeble a child had made such progress was wonderful. The old man's eyes were full of tears as he gazed on her, saying, "I doubt not Hilda's clock will soon strike."

I heard her still conversing with the angel concerning the Prince and his devotion to those for whom he had laid down his own life to save them from the results of their own undoing. The angel spoke of his deep interest in those who were running the race he had set before them, and how he rejoiced in their stedfastness and sorrowed when they swerved from his loving commands to follow their own wills and obey their own wishes.

But it was bitterly cold and the child seemed almost worn out. While I tenderly gazed I thought I saw a faint circle of light around her head.

As she ascended the steep hill the snow ceased, the sun suddenly began to shine and a robin to sing. Spring had come and the bird was uttering its gladness. Hilda's face was radiant, and the angel cried: —

"Happy Hilda! there is the goal, and by His grace you have won."

The child's clock had struck and the Prince with a loving smile awaited her.

"She is thine, O Lord and lover of souls," said the angel.

The Prince bore Hilda over the threshold of his palace into the glories within. Rejoicing for her, I turned to watch those who had started to run the race at the same moment with herself. Paulinus refused to make the effort to climb a hill — the last hill before the goal should be won. He sank down, the angel's entreaties falling on deaf, indifferent ears.

His clock was striking!

"Oh, no!" he screamed, starting to his feet; "not yet — not yet! I have not half finished my journey; it cannot be time; others have so much more time! Oh, save me! save me!" he shrieked to the angel.

But the angel had vanished and a cloud shrouded Paulinus from my sight.

While I was trembling with fear, my old companion told me that Monica had reached the King's palace safely, but not so quickly as Hilda; she had tarried too long in the race gathering flowers and forgetting the commands of the King and the strength to resist promised by the Prince to those who besought him.

And now there remained only Cyril. He was still tempted by the glittering jewels lying along his path. The angel entreated in vain.

"Cyril, your hour is ready to strike!"

Then the boy leaped from his crouching posture, threw away his pouch of costly gems, and panted up the hill crowned by the cross and the palace of the

King. Oh, how he strained every nerve! How his breath came thickly and sobbingly!

Just as he was within a few paces of the cross, his clock struck. But there came a darkness over the scene so that if the Prince were there, he was invisible. I heard my aged companion murmur: —

"It is written of the Prince: 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.'"

CHAPTER XIX.

SOWING TO THE WIND.

THE silence that followed Monsieur de Rosambert's last sentence was broken by a sweet bird warble — a new song to all save Hester and himself. The strain paused on the loveliest note, to be again resumed and again dropped ere the melody was completed.

"Oh! if one could only hear the conclusion of that song!" cried Hester, remembering the day Monsieur de Rosambert had found her on the shore and rowed her back to Bar Harbor. "Why does not the bird finish what he so deliciously began?"

They all sought in vain to see the singer. He was so minute and his plumage so inconspicuous that amid the clustering foliage he easily escaped detection. He sang no more; and when that special birch was unwatched, spread his tiny wings to fly farther up the glen.

"Were those the only notes he was fledged to sing?" asked Hester, who still mused on the unseen singer; "or is there a bird in fairyland who knows and will finish his fragment of a song?"

"Perhaps leaving its conclusion to the imagination is more of a boon than if he had trusted us with the completed melody," answered Henri de Rosambert.

"You would not say half a joy is better than the whole?" responded Hester.

"Sometimes; and always when the second half does not repeat the primal happiness."

Madame de Chavigni turned eagerly toward the speaker, then resumed her quiet attitude to ponder, for the first time, whether in all her grief and loneliness there could have come a heavier loss than the parting and the sad memories that followed.

"Was your story true, Monsieur de Rosambert?" asked Olga. "Are we each only waiting for our clock to strike?"

"Yes, dear Olga."

Olga mused, while the little party of friends resumed their interrupted conversation.

Hester bent down to gaze into the clear, deep pool at her feet, where she had caught a glimpse of a small, silvery fish with red spots on its pearly sides. Pretty trout! How swiftly it glided away beneath a rock jutting over one side of the ice-cold water!

Jack had seen the same vision. In half a second a fly-rod he had carried was dangling over Duck Brook and in a moment more a trout — the one Hester had seen or another — was landed, its captor triumphantly waving his rod in the air.

"Oh! you wicked neighbor, to catch such a pretty, pretty trout!" cried Olga, tears in her eyes and her cheeks burning.

"You 'll eat him fast enough!" retorted Jack.

"I 'll never, never eat him! And you struck his clock — poor, pretty trout!"

Jack, silently indignant, dropped the fish in his basket, and prepared to ascend the glen and try in another

and deeper pool, where he had always had great luck.

"Are we to return without you?" asked his mother.

"Yes, mamma; unless Olga cares to bear me company," with a mischievous glance in her direction.

"I? No, indeed!"

"Did you not eat trout this morning?"

"Yes; but I'll eat no more. I did not know how they look when happy in their own little streams. Good-by! You're a cruel-hearted neighbor to strike their clock!"

Bonnie ran the burnie doun,
Wanderin' and windin';
Sweetly sang the birds aboon,
Care never mindin';
And the mossy rock was there,
And the water lily fair,
And the little trout wad sport about
All in the sunny beam,

sang Jack, to tease Olga.

She turned her back and walked down the glen very quickly, not speaking till the party had reentered their carriages, and were driving down beautiful Eden Street between rocky, tree-shaded hills and green meadows slanting toward the sunlit sea.

On either hand were the picturesque villa-cottages of the many summer residents of Bar Harbor. The hotels were empty at that hour, every tourist seeking scenes congenial to his or her tastes.

Hester confidently anticipated tidings from her brother. Nor was she disappointed.

Basil, so long unseen, stood on the veranda of the

hotel eagerly awaiting her arrival, impatient even of introductions.

"O Basil! how glad I am to see you! But — is grandfather worse, that you are here?"

"No; he has sent for you."

Then Hester was whirled away in the carriage that had brought her brother to Ullescliffe, the breeze seeming to whisper in her agitated ear: —

"Till his clock strikes! Till his clock strikes!"

Nervous and trembling, she alighted before the beautiful cottage, thinking of the mother who had vainly longed for recognition and admission.

"Has she come?"

"I am here, grandfather."

The sweet, low voice responding to his querulous question was Lucy's. The old man winced and trembled. Hot tears rushed to his eyes as he extended an emaciated hand to his granddaughter.

"Do the dead — forgive?" he asked in a hoarse whisper.

There was no reply. Hester, choked by sobs, could not speak: and Basil, watching the emotion of the aged man and building on its results, had not caught the murmur.

"Can the dead forgive?" was asked in the same hoarse whisper.

"Mamma bade me say, if we ever met, that she loved and missed you to the last."

There was a groan of deep misery from Mr. Harcourt as his head sank on his breast. Suddenly he lifted it and turned eagerly to his granddaughter.

"Let me look at you! Open the windows wide, Fortescue. Kneel down where I can see you, Hester: here, close by my chair. So."

Grasping the girl's hand, he studied her lovely countenance till overcome by emotion — the misery which had tortured him and the remorse which had made his life one awful agony since his daughter's death.

Suddenly his hatred of Hester's father came sweeping over the softened mood, and he thrust out his hand, saying sharply, —

"Go — go! No child of Frederick Wilmerding shall ever inherit one farthing from me!"

Hester rose in all her youthful dignity and nobility of nature.

"We do not wish your wealth, grandfather. We are strong and can work — we *will* work, rather than be dependent upon your bounty."

"Are you going?"

"You told me to go."

"Yes, go! Your face and voice have tortured me cruelly. I 'll see and hear you no more. Fortescue I shall retain: he is useful and suits me."

"Then, good-by, grandfather."

Mr. Harcourt moved restlessly in his chair. Waving his hand in farewell, he sank back among his pillows, watching to the last the graceful figure and movements of the young girl he yearned to retain ever near him.

"Has Hester gone, Fortescue?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you not accompany her to the hotel?"

"I thought you might need me, sir."

"Humph! Do you pay Hester's hotel indebtedness out of the remuneration I allow you for attendance?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you other resources?"

"Not worth mentioning."

"Has Hester?"

"No, sir."

"Then you have wasted — and worse — not only your property, but hers."

There was no response.

Mr. Harcourt's smile was pitiless as he said: —

"You are not your mother's son: you are your father's, who cruelly stole my only child from me."

A silence, lasting several minutes, fell between the two.

"Bring the chessboard. I'll play and beat you!" said Mr. Harcourt in such a significant tone that Basil instantly surmised that some evil intent lurked behind the simple sentence.

"But first give me my writing case."

Basil complied, while inwardly resolving that the vow he had made on entering Bar Harbor should more completely rule his every thought and action.

For half an hour Mr. Harcourt wrote feebly but determinedly, with many pauses, often glancing at his grandson, aversion and satisfaction mingling in the gleam of his clear blue eyes. Then the paper was folded, placed in an envelope, sealed, and addressed to his lawyers in New York, with a line above the address: —

"*Not to be opened till six months after my death.*"

This was again placed in a larger and stronger envelope, addressed anew, and stamped; then dispatched by Mr. Harcourt's man servant to the mail.

"Now I'll play with you, Basil," he said, leaning back in his chair exhausted. "No; I must rest half an hour. Give me my tonic, and you may walk till then, or do as you choose."

That night, between eleven and twelve, Basil quietly withdrew Mr. Harcourt's keys from the pocket of his satin wrapper and applied the smallest of the bunch to a square, heavily clamped oak box always standing on his grandfather's special table. Examining its contents, he sought, found, and then removed a long, narrow package. The box was relocked, and the keys returned to their resting place. In a second the fire burning on the hearth was deftly stirred and the long, narrow package was swiftly consumed amid its leaping flames. While Basil watched its destruction, aversion and satisfaction gleamed in his eyes as they had in those of his grandfather earlier in the evening.

When the last vestige of the paper package had disappeared, he sprang to his feet, every feature exultant. Sleep? No, indeed! He must walk, run, fly! Every nerve was tingling triumphantly, for all pressure of anxious care was removed. If his grandfather were to die suddenly, all his large possessions would naturally revert to himself and Hester — for the obnoxious will, assigning the estate to others, existed no longer!

Out into the moonlight sped Basil, and down the towpath by Frenchman's Bay leading to Cromwell's Harbor.

Across the water the moon had risen. The path, the sea, the sail of many a boat, the rocks, the islands, and the mainland — all partook of the beautiful illumination. The tranquil silence of the summer night was all around him. In the south gleamed the warning light in Egg Rock Lighthouse; in the harbor glittered the lights on yachts at anchor. The large proportions of Bald Porcupine, in all the might of its rugged cliffs, rose above the water, snowy where the moonbeams rested, sable where it loomed in the shadow. The outline of other islands was dim; phosphorescent the glitter of the waves. Rowboats, from which songs were wafted, crossed and recrossed the silvery band that lay athwart the bay. Voices called from one canoe to another. Occasionally the long, desolate cry of the loon rang out and died over the water.

From the cottages of summer residents floated music, and lights streamed amid the foliage and across the lawns. Although it was after midnight, gayety still held its festival at Bar Harbor.

Basil sat down on a rock, just above a pretty cove where children had played half the day, watching the sails against the deep-blue sky, or wading in the little pools gathering shells and pebbles. Those little ones were now slumbering as sweetly and carelessly as Basil had once slumbered — but would sleep no more, haunted by the remembrance of that package

consumed on the hearth of his grandfather's cottage. He was amazed to discover that his exultation had suddenly disappeared, while his resolute purpose remained so unshaken. Whither had his joy fled? his castles in the air? his thrilling anticipations for the future?

The deliciously sweet, dreamy strains of "The Lorelei" floated out to him from the open casements of the nearest cottage. All the blue and shining Rhine was in its musical flow, and the siren's song in its heart-melting melody. So had the siren sung to him; and her song had drawn him on and on and on, till, as the boatman in Heine's poem, gazing on the height where sat the beauteous singer, he also forgot the perilous rapids while the lovely voice floated over the river but to mock and destroy him.

Basil rose; his pale, determined face, clearly revealed in the moonlight, had aged; but he did not regret his deed; he only regretted that the charm had faded and that the years to come would hold no magic strong enough to gild the ease that should be his through one act of treachery and wrong.

"Right or wrong, I have done it! I am glad, and ready to abide all the results," he thought, rising from the rock and gazing once more seaward, for the witchery of the summer night still held him. Sauntering back to Ullescliffe, he seemed already to possess the wealth he had coveted as he remembered the remark with which his grandfather had locked the oaken box: —

"All is now in order. This will not be reopened

till after my death. Then hand my keys to Boultby & Cassiton; they will see my will executed."

As Basil strode on, the face of Gudule de Rosambert — which he had seen but once — flitted before him, an expression of scorn in the proud, clear eyes for the deed in which he had so triumphed.

CHAPTER XX.

THE INDIAN ENCAMPMENT.

HESTER suffered for days from the strain of that painful interview with her grandfather. He was ever before her — now tearful and tender, then harsh and repellent.

Basil wrote her: —

He speaks constantly of you, but refuses to see you. Many questions are asked concerning your tastes, studies, plans, and friends. You are commiserated for being left to my "faithless care." Again and again grandfather recurs to your loss of property through my "extravagance and dishonesty." He does not hesitate to use the latter term with peculiar and bitter vehemence. For my care of him he vouchsafes no thanks; still he will not permit me to leave him. Somewhere in that hard, pitiless nature there is a vein of human feeling; he cannot utterly ignore that I am his daughter's son. Would he respected the rights he seeks to ignore!

This morning he burned package after package of old letters and papers. I am very glad of that.

The last six words were so carefully erased that Hester could not decipher them.

He talks constantly of the past, wishing he had his life to re-live.

"With your present experience, of course," I ventured to suggest.

"Yes; otherwise I would perpetrate the same mistakes from which I suffer to-day. To be young again, Fortescue! Oh, what it would be to be young! and then — with my present knowledge — to carve my life to wider, greater ends! If I had known, oh, what could I not have saved both my daughter and myself!"

"But my dear mother was happy, sir."

"Happy? Never!"

"Pardon me, grandfather; I have not forgotten my home."

The veins on his temples swelled violently; his eyes flashed and he clenched his hand.

"To the hour of your mother's death she regretted our estrangement."

"I grant that, grandfather."

"Then do not speak of happiness! Now take yourself off for a walk or a row, or to see Hester. I 'll not need you for an hour or more."

But I did not comply. I only withdrew to write letters and read.

While Hester was holding Basil's note in her hand she heard Jack Bolton's voice.

"Oh, are you here, Miss Wilmerding? I am glad! I have just returned from a sail past Egg Rock Lighthouse to the cod-fishing grounds. We had fine luck! But now we are going to the Indian encampment, and we wish you and your friends to join us."

"Here we are!" responded Miss Conway in her blithe tones. "Your mother's note came a moment since. Ah, I see her!"

The party debated whether they should row to the encampment or walk there across the bluff. The latter course was preferred. So the friends strolled on in the sweet air and warm sunshine, enjoying every step of the way.

While Hester was wishing for her brother, he unexpectedly joined her. He had called at the hotel, and, learning from Judith the path the party had taken, was presently in their midst answering questions concerning Mr. Harcourt, who, happily engaged

with an old New York friend for the time, had dismissed his grandson from attendance.

Hester was troubled by her brother's paleness and forced gayety. She linked her arm in his.

"You are overworking, Basil," she remonstrated gently.

"Nonsense! Remember I have Dawson as well as Clinton, if I need relief; besides the lifting does not devolve on me. I am at Ullescliffe as companion, reader, chessplayer, and also as a target for the sharp arrows which his highness enjoys shooting. They hit the bull's eye, too!"

"Oh, how I wish grandfather were fond of you! Yet he must be — his own nearest kin."

"With his peculiar disposition that weighs lightly," responded her brother bitterly.

"I had such a strange dream last night, Basil. Grandfather was standing on a rock overhanging the sea. In his hand I saw a long, narrow, folded paper.

"'I made a vow, Hester,' said he. 'Come and witness that I renounce it.'

"The paper was then torn in a hundred pieces. As the wind caught them, I saw on a fluttering strip — 'Last will and testament.' 'O grandfather,' I cried, 'is it your will you are destroying?' 'Yes, child. When I am gone, there being no will, you and Basil will inherit all.' Then he faded from my sight; but on the green waves still floated the torn will that by its destruction revoked the vow he had kept so long."

Basil was extremely agitated; unaccountably so to

Hester, who watched him anxiously. The new lines of care and unrest, so visible on his face, distressed her.

He was thinking — "What if a sudden remorse should suggest to grandfather the reopening of his oak box to destroy the will!"

He dropped his sister's arm. "I must return to Ullescliffe, Hester."

"O Basil, do come with us! You have so little change; so little that is pleasant or refreshing."

"So little? I have nothing but heavy care and perplexity," replied he bitterly. "Would it were all over — well over!" he muttered under his breath.

Hurriedly excusing himself, Basil left the party, goaded by the awful fear that soon his act might be revealed, to his own complete undoing.

Monsieur de Rosambert read Hester's trouble in her face. Taking Basil's place, he endeavored to soothe her anxiety.

"If it were any one else! But I know my brother's temperament. He is becoming ill from sleeplessness and uncertainty."

"The strain cannot continue long. Mr. Wilmerding is young and strong; and do you know, mademoiselle, this very care you deprecate is increasing your brother's power of self-control and expanding his nature in new ways."

Hester half smiled.

"Fear paralyzes all that is best in us; does it not? You cannot use your energies as you would if you were hopeful. When your brother needs sunshine, you can only invite him into your cloud."

"Too true! But there is evil in the world, Monsieur de Rosambert."

"That I admit, mademoiselle; but evil noted and checkmated. There is above us an Eye, and in the midst of us a Hand; a divine Will that must have its sweet and beneficent way."

"But in the meantime"—

"We suffer if we forget; but the end will rebuke our doubt, showing us the good that was coming, as the dawn follows the darkness of the night."

"Is this your faith or observation?" asked Hester, only half convinced.

"Both."

"Sometimes I too believe it. I wish it were thus with me always."

Olga, rapturous over the return of Count Viazemski, and holding his hand, was dancing on before them. Jack and Nelly, with Gudule de Rosambert and Meta, were just behind. Madame de Chavigni, leaning on the arm of a young Creole cousin, Arthur Carroll, who had lately arrived at Bar Harbor, was walking on slowly by the side of Miss Conway and Mrs. Bolton.

They were now crossing the bluff, where, amid clustering thickets of fragrant vanilla grass and sweet fern, wild roses budded, blossomed, and dropped their petals till the ground was rosy with their bloom.

There was a large crowd of visitors at the encampment. They went in and out of the tents set like booths on either side of a wide, neat carriage road, and were looking at, pricing, and buying every variety

of work the Penobscots and Passamaquoddies had to offer.

Olga immediately seized a stuffed owl to carry to Russia, to remind her of her neighbor's silver owl which she had upset that memorable day. She also purchased some bows and arrows, a gull's silvery breast and wings, and a tiny canoe and paddles, as mementos of Bar Harbor.

Mrs. Bolton and Miss Conway ordered a quantity of wood baskets and flowerpots of birch bark, adorned with an etched frieze of Mount Desert scenes.

Arthur Carroll picked out a sealskin, a deerskin, a canoe, a pair of moccasins, a pair of snowshoes, and a lacrosse bat to send on to Louisiana.

Gudule and Meta fancied the pretty baskets of sweet-scented vanilla grass of various shapes and hues. Gudule chose one of soft yellow, curiously braided and fashioned, to lay on her toilet table in Paris when the sky was cloudy, that it might remind her of Bar Harbor sunshine and all the happy hours and the friends she had made in that enchanting Mount Desert across the sea.

Miss Conway, unobserved, gently laid her purse in Hester's hand, bidding the girl buy anything — everything — she fancied; but Hester, smiling, as gently returned the full portemonnaie. Then Miss Patty, shaking her head, made her own selections, buying every pretty bit of work she thought her dear Hester would fancy and ordering the big package sent on to the hotel.

Jack had filled Nelly's hands with whatever he saw

she approved, besides burdening his own arms with what she could not carry.

Madame de Chavigni bought some lovely, pearly grebe plumage, intending it for Hester's winter adornment, and was turning to her to ask a question, when she felt a tiny hand clutching her gown, and looking down saw a little Indian girl, with liquid eyes shedding love on the strange lady whose beautiful face had bewitched her across the tent.

Constance de Chavigni stooped to gather the tiny creature in her arms. Children were painfully attractive to this woman. In their features, forms, voices, smiles, and tears she saw the haunting image of her own vanished darling. When the stranger's little hand touched her cheek, she shivered and shrank back.

The child felt it, and immediately questioned the lovely face of the lady with humid eyes and trembling lips. To this too sensitive nature — keenly, painfully responsive to every word and look, as the mimosa to the faintest human touch or breath — what of suffering had not life in reserve?

"Tell me your name, little one."

"Zelma."

"And your age."

There was no reply.

An old squaw had drawn near.

"Zelma is four. Zelma have no father, no mother," she said. "She lives with all. All take care. Zelma plait baskets; she make living."

"Let me have Zelma!" cried Madame de Chavigni.

"One hundred dollar!" was the eager answer.

"I will give the Penobscots five hundred. That is more than Zelma will ever earn by basket plaiting."

The Indians gathered round the lady. The eldest in the group, an aged Penobscot, prepared to make the transfer according to Indian law. It took but little time. Then Madame de Chavigni and her charge, accompanied by her friends, left the encampment.

The adoption of Zelma was the theme of conversation at Bar Harbor. No one, save Hester and Judith, understood the secret of that sudden impulse and overpowering yearning for a child to love and be loved by.

But an Indian!

All Bar Harbor demurred, doubting the wisdom of the step and wondering if race peculiarities would not later cause Madame de Chavigni much difficulty.

"At any rate it is a diversion, an interest, a whim in which a wealthy woman may indulge herself!" said the gossiping crowd.

Mrs. Bolton was deeply shocked. Miss Conway was too amazed to discuss the act. Meta and Jack marveled, the latter openly amusing himself by speculating how long the Creole lady could guard the little half-savage creature from a return to wildwood paths, for she would surely hunger and thirst for her "native heath." "And yet, who knows?" thought Jack, while drawing from memory the beautiful face, whose every feature, softened from the original type, almost led him to believe that Zelma must have been

stolen from some Spanish mother for her witchery of face and form.

Monsieur de Rosambert, Gudule, and Helen Armitage refrained from expressing an opinion. They thought they might trust the wisdom of Madame de Chavigni's own instincts.

Arthur Carroll was dumfounded, as he explained, and looked on, wondering how his cousin Constance would manage to introduce her nursling to the notice of the fastidious in New Orleans.

Hester, happy for her friend's new interest, exclaimed: "I am glad, very glad that you have found Zelma and that she has found you!"

"I believe it was meant to be," was all Madame de Chavigni responded.

To dress the lovely child according to her own refined taste, to teach her, to play with her, and above all to bestow her long pent-up love on a little creature who drank in every expression of her tenderness as a thirsty flower drinks the rain, was a blessing whose enriching power to the sorrow-smitten woman no one could measure. Her sad eyes lost the wistful yearning that had so pained Hester. Her step became light and quick, and her mellow laugh, never before heard by Hester, was awakened by Zelma after all the long years of silence and self-repression. The child was her shadow, clinging to her alone while glancing shyly at every other face and avoiding every other touch.

Hester began also to believe that "it was meant to be," and that the little one was a heaven-sent gift as

of sweet spring to the winter of many suffering years. Under Zelma's unconscious influence long-sealed forces wakened, and Constance de Chavigni was a new creature.

Judith wept as she joyfully watched this resurrection of a nature she had supposed dead. Far from feeling jealous of the fresh interest that had broken the bitter and most heavy chains of her beloved mistress, she rejoiced, and ministered to the child most faithfully.

CHAPTER XXI.

WATER LILIES FROM ECHO LAKE.

THAT sunny, gracious morning on which Miss Conway and her friends had walked to the Indian encampment was followed by several days of fog. Its coming is always the opportunity at Bar Harbor for resuming indoor occupations — letter writing, reading, sewing, embroidery, and piano practice, enlivened by the always brightly burning logs on every Bar Harbor hearth.

The lifting of the fog was watched for with the interest peculiar to each individual. To the many it was only the removal of an uncomfortable interference with the walks, drives, rows, and tennis that lured them into the delicious air and sunshine; to the few its dissipation was noted with a keen delight in the attendant picturesqueness.

"I maintain," said Monsieur de Rosambert, "that we enjoy our sunlight all the more for these occasional days of fog."

"Granted," replied Gudule. "But I would like to live where fog was unknown — mental, physical, or natural!"

The dense, chilly mist that had enfolded Bar Harbor — through which one could hear but not see the beating of the surge against the cliffs, or the incoming and outgoing steamers from Portland and

Rockland — gave evidence of a change that was hailed from every window. The apparent remoteness of Bar Harbor from all contact with simple, natural pleasures — Mount Desert seeming to rest amid the clouds in the spectral atmosphere — was at last ended. A silvery luster enlivened the gloomy density; the cloud-curtain quivered, and then slowly lifted, to reveal the gleam of sunshine on a sail, the hull of the vessel being still hidden.

"Ah, there are the sea gulls!" cried Olga, "and the trees of one of the islands!"

So, little by little, sea and shore were restored from cloudland, and Bar Harbor resumed its charming outdoor life enhanced by the brief loss of sunny hours.

Count Viazemski was soon to return to Russia, and Olga hung around Nelly in a doleful frame of mind.

"If we could do something, hear something, at the same time of day, it would not be so unhappy for me," sighed Olga, surveying, with maternal pride, her Brussels doll, arrayed in the garments Jack had so derided.

"If we study one of the Gospels daily," suggested Nelly.

"Then let it be Saint Luke's, where you showed me my 'neighbor,'" returned Olga, brightening. "I will promise to read each day at a certain hour, and write for an answer to what I do not understand. My letters shall be in English; for at home I speak always in Russ or French."

"To hear from you will be something for which to watch the incoming steamers."

"And I'll read and read your letters; for you'll tell me all you do and what my neighbor does; and about Miss Conway and her friends."

"I will keep a diary for you, Olga, writing a page or two daily, and then mail it to you on each Saturday's steamer."

Olga's gratitude was expressed in her enfolding arms and rapid kisses.

"Will there always be 'neighbors'? Must I remember them in Russia as at Bar Harbor?"

"What do you think, honestly?" asked Helen, laughing.

"I asked papa if I could carry home anything I chose from Mount Desert.

"'Certainly,' answered he.

"Then I said, 'Be careful, papa, for I wish to find a second Zelma!' You should have seen papa's face lengthen.

"'Pardon my retracting, for the first time, a promise I have made, Olga; but I could not undertake the care of a small Indian, even to gratify my little daughter.' And I am not sure I now care for her, Miss Nelly. Really, I only wish you or Miss Hester — ah, do come home with me! I'll show you as many marvels in St. Petersburg and Moscow as you have shown me on Mount Desert. See!" running for a portfolio of very beautiful water-color Russian views. "This is the church of Saint Basil. All the pretty blues and gold and silver and green and lilac are painted just as you see them in this picture, only more beautifully! There are other churches and

palaces — oh, so many, and so rich and splendid, with amber and jewels and gold and silver! There is nothing elsewhere to equal them, papa says."

Jack came rushing in. "Who will go to Echo Lake with me and bring home hundreds of water lilies?"

"I will go, and Miss Nelly and papa."

"The other day I climbed up Beech Hill and saw Mount Desert with all its lakes at my feet, and silvery Somes' Sound shining through the middle. I sat down on a bank of juniper — oh! how sweetly it did smell! and how easy to sit on! I looked down, down, down a granite precipice — hundreds of feet — into Echo Lake. The lily buds were floating and the lilies were lying white as snow on the blue water."

"Oh, why did you not take us with you?"

"Because I had not intended climbing Beech Hill when I started. But I made a vow that I'd invite you as soon as the fog took itself off to sea. So here I am! You will come and gather lilies?"

"Oh, yes! Shall we climb Beech Hill?"

"Not to reach Echo Lake. We must drive round the other side. Now, away with you, Nelly and Olga, and I'll find Count Viazemski."

As Jack and his party whirled away from Bar Harbor in quest of water lilies, Monsieur de Rosambert, Gudule, and Hester were driving up Eden Street, past the many picturesque homes of the wealthy summer residents. As they crossed the bridge over Duck Brook and ascended a steep hill, the most exquisite view of Frenchman's Bay greeted them. Many vessels were flitting across the sunlit water, or gliding in

and out between the islands. On and on rolled the carriage till the road, crossing another brook, lost itself in the Bay Drive, to merge into the old country road leading to Hull's Cove.

Monsieur de Rosambert and Gudule were anxious to see what remained of the second French colony on Mount Desert — the graves of the descendants of the Baron de Cadillac, to whom Louis XIV granted the whole of the island in recognition of his valuable services for the French crown in America. The wooden cross in the little graveyard on the hill at Hull's Cove was found, marking the resting place of the De Grégoires, who had passed away in 1810.

Reëntering the carriage, they drove to the pretty beach on the northern shore where were tall cliffs hollowed by the sea into grand arches, etched with zigzag moldings, in whose deep recesses one involuntarily glances for the massive doors seen in old cathedrals. Standing within the recess, what a vision of sky, sea, and island was framed within the bold and mighty arch that towered toward the blue! The smooth, sandy beach recalled Miss Conway's description of a picnic given there by moonlight, with bonfires kindled within the deep recesses, ruddily illuming the vast arches and casting grotesque shadows worthy of gnome dances and elfin faces, denouncing mutely all invaders of their eerie festivals.

"If we return by the head of Somes' Sound, and thence to Bar Harbor by the Eagle Lake road, we shall doubtless meet the water lily gatherers," said Monsieur de Rosambert; and so it proved.

CATHEDRAL ROCK,
Near Hull's Cove

Laps and baskets were laden with the gleaming, snowy lilies resting amid their cool, pale green leaves.

"Oh, the old scow was better than a boat!" cried Olga. "I have lilies and lilies, for you all, and for the little Indian, too. We saw the biggest eagle on Echo Cliff! When he spread his great wings and floated away over Beech Hill I could have ridden on his back, and little Zelma too!"

While laughing and talking, Olga was filling the lap of Hester and Gudule with water lilies. She would not return to Bayview Cottage till she had given a share to Miss Conway and Madame de Chavigni. The latter had just returned from a drive with her little adopted child, who was all smiles and innocent happiness as she buried her olive face amid the snowy bloom, and listened to Olga's animated voice telling how they had been gathered from their home on such a blue, blue lake!

Madame de Chavigni moved as one released from a burden that had bowed her form and sapped her strength. Her shining glance rested on Zelma, and she embraced and spoke in loving tones to the small, graceful creature whose step was becoming elastic and whose carriage already bore promise of the lithe and noble bearing of her race.

"She is my little forest fairy," said Madame de Chavigni to Monsieur de Rosambert. "All the air of the free, fragrant woods, of the blue lakes, grand mountains, and silvery streams of Mount Desert are around her. The song of the sea is as dear and familiar to her as the cradle song of a mother. I have

seen her throw herself on the cliff and listen entranced to the beating surge with a smile tender, proud, and loving; then stretch forth her arms to the breeze and the sea gulls, feeling that they were akin to her own nature."

"I can see what interest and pure pleasure she has brought you."

"Ah, you do not know the half without knowing the sad story of my life. Zelma is my 'way of escape,' is n't she? 'that I might be able' to endure the memory of my sorrowful past and empty present and future? In her I have awakened to new life. Her education will be my chief occupation and joy. I can bear now to think of New Orleans, because she will be the center of my desolate home. From her streams of fresh interest will always flow into my life. I had asked Hester to come to me. How happy she could have made me! But she could not promise. In Zelma I found one who needed me; one without ties — as lonely as myself. Into her young life I hope to bring all the sunshine that has been denied to mine."

"Who denied it?" gently asked Monsieur de Rosambert.

Madame de Chavigni was mute.

"And Who has re-given, not what you lost, but a new joy that must ever deepen and widen your best nature as time glides on?"

"True."

"Believe me; 'The Lord is rich unto all that call upon him,' whether by conscious prayer or by the

misery of a life of which he alone knows every suffering detail."

Constance de Chavigni drew a long breath as she unconsciously clasped her hands and gazed at the noble sympathetic face before her.

"I have doubted God," she murmured. "I have hated to remember him, believing he permitted the awful agony of my life which hopelessly wrecked me when I was young — so young! Oh," she continued, her lovely face piteous, as memory vividly recalled the past, "I have suffered too much! I am wounded; broken from head to foot. The rack on which I was stretched spared nothing of its cruel power to torture and destroy both mind and body. And yet you tell me 'God is love'!"

"'God *is* love,' notwithstanding all the clouds that darkly usher in some of his providences. If you had yielded, — not thrust the anguish from you, — those years of blackness and desolation would have been borne by a stronger, mightier than you, dear Madame de Chavigni."

"I succumbed to the suffering and hated the Will that had allowed it."

"It is in refusing to accept pain that the sting lies and thrusts its venom deeper and deeper into the wound."

"One could not accept such a doom!" cried Constance passionately.

"But it is in just that bending, melting of the human will that the first ray of sunlight can pierce the gloom."

Madame de Chavigni gazed toward the sea, silent and sorrowful.

"To each nature that trial is sent which will most test the power of the sufferer to hold firmly, loyally to God. To distrust him — to let go our hold on the heavenly — is the temptation. To feel that God is cruel, forgetful, is the first step the soul takes into that darkness too immeasurable, too awful to contemplate. Oh, the loss of all earth contains is not worth the risk one dares in letting go the divine hand that alone can save and heal us!"

"And — to let go — that is the temptation?"

"Yes; it is our test — the measure of our fidelity."

"Ah! I cannot, cannot say or feel 'Thy will be done!' to the way in which all I loved were separated from me! If my dearest ones had been taken from me in some less terribly cruel manner, I might, perhaps, have patiently accepted the pain and held firmly the hand that smote me. But there was no mercy in my trial. Every memory harrows and fills my soul with horror. And how they suffered!" she cried brokenly. "The night was around them, the awful terror of the sea, the wind, the darkness, and the hurricane! O Monsieur de Rosambert, do not try to help me. There is no help! Zelma is the first beam that has come to stay in my wrecked and lonely life."

"And who sent Zelma?"

A faint smile illumined the pale face; but Constance responded in no other way.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TOWPATH.

WHERE Basil had sat on the rocky shore path in the moonlight, Hester sat in the sunlight, a big sun umbrella over her shoulder and a book on her knee; but she was not reading. The radiant aspect of sea and sky, the dazzling, snowy cloud mountains, the drifting sails, floating gulls, fresh verdure of the islands contrasting with their rugged cliffs, and the birch-bark canoes, each paddled by an Indian — all charmed and held her attention captive. Gudule and Meta sat near her, embroidering, while Nelly read aloud. Olga and Zelma were just below, digging in a cove, their merry laughter floating to the party on the rocks, causing a responsive and involuntary smile.

Madame de Chavigni was at Hester's right hand; and Miss Conway and Mrs. Bolton, comparing their experiences on the continent, were oblivious of all else for the moment.

Monsieur de Rosambert, Count Viazemski, Arthur Carroll, and Jack were out on the bay, and Hester watched their sailboat as it neared the part of the shore where her party was gathered.

"When the De Rosamberts and Viazemskis return to Europe, Miss Conway and the Boltons and Helen to New York, and you, Madame de Chavigni, to New

Orleans, I shall still sit here. You may imagine me alone on the rocks and — be sorry for me!" said Hester, half laughing, yet with a quiver in her voice that revealed how lonely she would be without the kind friends who had given Mount Desert such a charm.

"But why need you remain behind us?" eagerly asked the Creole lady. "If your grandfather's condition continues the same and your brother must remain, why cannot you come with me? Think of the southern city you have never seen, that will give you so much to see and remember. My home will always possess a room over whose door will be inscribed, 'Hester's.' Zelma can never cause forgetfulness of one whose sympathy and love were, and are, so very, very dear to me! If the day dawns on which you are free to choose your home, remember that Constance de Chavigni claims you — if you will only, only come!"

"You are more than kind to me," murmured Hester, gratefully.

"You will write every week, will you not? In any sorrow or joy, if you need me, Hester, only call and I will come. What are miles? I should never think of the distance between north and south where you are concerned."

Zelma came running with her lap full of shells, seaweed, and pebbles. Her cheeks wore the bloom of a peach, her eyes beamed as she approached the one being whom she idolized with a love too great to utter save in those dumb ways by which a dog gives expression to his devotion for his master.

"For you — all for you," emptying her treasures

in the lap of her best friend, throwing her arms round her neck, and resting her head on her shoulder.

Madame de Chavigni expressed her pleasure, while patting the little hand that had so carefully selected what the child deemed the prettiest gifts the sea had brought to the cove for her loveliest and dearest.

"Happy Zelma!" said Hester, longing always to possess thus the companionship she prized so deeply.

Monsieur de Rosambert and Count Viazemski had left the boat and were coming to them over the rocks, while Jack and Arthur sailed farther down the bay.

Each had a package of foreign letters. Sitting down by Hester and Madame de Chavigni, they begged permission to examine their mail.

Presently Olga claimed her father's attention, and he left the little party to learn in what dilemma his small daughter might be. Marfa stood near her, laughing, and Judith was on the other side with Zelma; but the little Russian would allow no one but her father to approach her.

Meantime, Henry de Rosambert had handed Gudule three letters addressed to Mademoiselle de Rosambert, and was busy over seven of his own.

"One from my dear mother, the other six from friends who are engaged in the Parisian work of Mr. McAll. This letter is from Mère Michaud. Great happiness has come to her; those for whom she has been praying and working have learned the happy truth that is the solace and inspiration of her own noble, unselfish life. Your kind questions of last

evening, Mademoiselle Wilmerding, have encouraged me to tell you of what so deeply interests me."

"I would be so glad if you would inform me, monsieur, of the commencement of the McAll work in Paris."

"My narrative may prove too long even for your kind wish; but you tempt me to comply when you ask of what so nearly concerns me."

"Test my interest, monsieur."

"I will then tell you what Mère Michaud told me. I was in Switzerland during that August of 1871 when the McAlls came over from England for a brief holiday. They had no thought then of leaving friends and country to become workers in France. Their own parish was dear to them and it seemed that God had placed their life work there.

"On the evening in August which I have mentioned, Mère Michaud, her day's work done, walked slowly down one of the thoroughfares of Belleville, — a suburb of Paris, the workingman's district, — her fine, sad face lighting as she recognized the groups of artisans hastening home. Jacques, her son, had hastened thus before the communists' insurrection in the spring of that same 1871; but he was then in prison expiating that crime with hundreds of others not yet released. As Mère Michaud looked at those ardent, energetic workmen, contrasting their freedom with Jacques' imprisonment, her heart trembled with anguish; yet daily she went from her little home to see them pass and exchange a kind greeting with one and another, breathing a secret prayer for each.

"A fervent hope of better days for her beloved Paris filled this humble woman's heart. She was ever beseeching the all-powerful God for a deliverance. Though the streets were then peaceful, she could never, never forget how, three months earlier, they had rung with cries of massacre and streamed red with blood.

"At what moment might not these scenes repeat themselves? No priest could calm that lawless, murderous crowd of men and women. Therefore, Mère Michaud said, she daily prayed that the Spirit of the good God, for Jesus' sake, would move on the turbulent waters of their souls and bring forth the fruits of holiness."

"Then Mère Michaud was not a Roman Catholic in 1871, monsieur?"

"No, a Protestant; not by birth, but from conviction. Two years before, a dangerous illness had seized her at Auvergne, where she was nursed by an earnest Christian and taught to prize the treasures hidden in the New Testament.

"When she returned to Paris, her old friends laughed loud and long at her change of creed and renouncement of Romanism. Not that they cared for the teachings of the priests, or believed them; but it amused them to find a woman so earnest in matters of religion. During the awful insurrection of the people she remained unmolested; for though none would adopt her changed opinions, those wild, unbelieving hearts instinctively respected the goodness revealing itself in all Mère Michaud's words, acts, and ways.

"As I said, she came slowly down the street this August evening in 1871, nodding right and left, growing more and more cheerful as she remembered that lately she had seen signs in her beloved people of increased weariness of priestcraft and some faint indications of a longing for a settled faith.

"Though it was only here and there that one had expressed to her a desire to believe as she believed, yet this hopeful, loving soul took courage and prayed more and more fervently. Several times she had been sought and questioned, and eagerly had she told the glad tidings of a Saviour who had come to seek and save that which was lost. Men and women listened, half convinced, and then went on their way, while she continued praying for them and her beloved son Jacques.

"The large warm faith of Mère Michaud was not to be disappointed; deliverance was at hand.

"At the corner of two broad thoroughfares a crowd of workingmen had gathered. She hastened forward to see that they were grouped around a gentleman and lady, foreigners, who were distributing little French books and talking gently and persuasively.

"Suddenly Antoine Joubert stepped forth, addressing the gentleman in broken English.

"'Sir,' said he, 'are you not a Protestant minister? Then I have something to tell you. Throughout this whole district, containing tens of thousands of workmen, we are, to a man, done with the priests. But if any one would now teach us a religion of truth, freedom, and reality, many of us are ready for it.

Mère Michaud will tell you as much. She hopes for our future; she has daily prayed for us; yes, for two years,' his voice sinking to a whisper.

"The English clergyman and his wife, much moved, left Belleville, feeling that a call from God had met them on the spot where the dreaded communists had so lately terrified the world with their lawless deeds, but were now yearning for the true Light and beseeching to be taught.

"Nor was Antoine Joubert's the only pathetic entreaty. Before leaving Paris a mechanic spoke beseechingly to Mr. McAll: 'O sir, will you not come and teach our poor people the true religion?'

"Mère Michaud found the days all too short for her prayer and praise. She was sure the English strangers would return and teach the gospel to those so hungry for its truths. 'The words of entreaty they heard in France will echo on in their English home, till they rise and come away,' she said more than once to her friends, who feared they should never again see the clergyman and his gentle wife.

"Nor was her faith disappointed. The McAlls did relinquish their English home and returned to Paris, opening their first mission room in Belleville on January 17, 1872."

"Ah, it seems almost too good to be true!" cried Hester, who had unweariedly listened to her French friend. "And from that hour the work has progressed?"

"From that hour. You shall read Mr. McAll's own reports when you have leisure. They are deeply interesting."

"I can believe it. Ah, how I wish I could work for something that is worth while!" exclaimed Hester. "I am almost twenty-one and cannot see a result that pleases me or has aided any one."

"If you only" — began Monsieur de Rosambert eagerly; but checked himself, for Hester was rising to leave the shore in answer to a summons from Miss Conway.

The towpath was becoming too thronged by tourists, drawn thither by the beauty of sea and sky.

"One will soon have to seek Cape Breton Island," said Miss Patty. "There alone can one now find the solitude that reigned at Mount Desert when I first knew it."

"But society is so necessary," began Meta.

Miss Patty, gathering up her shawl, laughed, but vouchsafed no other answer.

"Consider, dear Miss Patty," persisted Meta; "the friends found at Mount Desert would have been missed at Cape Breton Island this summer. What is life worth without congenial companionship?"

"I 'm not denying that, you foolish girl! But if I had been at Cape Breton Island the De Rosamberts would certainly have sought me — their only friend in America. Basil Wilmerding might have sailed farther east for variety, bringing his sweet sister to delight me; and your mother and Madame de Chavigni might have preferred that wonderful silence of seashore. You perceive I have no desire to enjoy without my dear friends; all I crave is some seclusion from the thronging numbers at Bar Harbor."

"They entertain me," answered Meta. "I like the variety of the life, the gayety, the incessant entertainment. Each day is so crowded with pleasant engagements. At Cape Breton Island I should indeed possess some dear friends, but"—

"Oh, you ungrateful child!" exclaimed Miss Patty. "The day will come when the presence of one real, loyal friend will outweigh a thousandfold all the gay society of a dozen Bar Harbors."

Meta glanced up into the sweet benign old face and saw a tear twinkling in the kind blue eyes. She linked her arm in Miss Conway's, holding the sun umbrella over her head, and thus escorted her back to her hotel, talking merrily to win her old friend to her usual bright speech and manner.

But Meta was not so entirely at ease as she would fain have appeared. Ever since the day in Duck Brook Glen she had been haunted by the vision of Paulinus sinking into slumber on the fern bank. What was her gay society life but a slumber, compared with the motive which she knew exalted the lives of the De Rosamberts? No aim higher than pleasure was hers; no purpose stronger than self-pleasing; no apprehension of responsibility for time, wealth, and talents. She, like Paulinus, had no inclination to rise from her green and fragrant fern bank, though her full repose was marred by thorns of remembrance and the vision of what she might have been if long ago she had thrown off the mental lethargy that now bound her from head to foot. The guardian angel had glanced imploringly toward the

King's palace, entreating divine aid in rousing his slumbering charge. Had the petition of her guardian angel wafted the breeze that now stirred her sleeping faculties and latent will?

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BELLS OF IVAN.

FOR days after he had parted from Hester, Basil, tortured by apprehension, now his daily meat and drink, knew no rest. Mr. Harcourt's friend had returned to New York and the old man was unusually silent. This silence seemed full of significance in Basil's nervous state. How angrily he condemned his impatience and temerity in opening that oak box till the hands now tremulous and warm were still and cold in death!

"I should have had an abundance of time — an abundance of time!" he muttered restlessly, glancing at the clear-cut features of the fine face and head that lay back against the pillows of the commodious chair.

"I have a fancy to see Count Viazemski," said Mr. Harcourt abruptly. "You told me he had returned to Bar Harbor. When I was in Russia I often met his father and traveled with him into Circassia. The present count was then only a lad."

"Do you wish to see him immediately?"

"Yes. Write a note at my dictation. Alexis has no idea that one who knew his father is so near him at Bar Harbor."

"Nor did I know it, sir."

"No; you know literally nothing of my life.

Sometimes I believe it would have been wise if I had asked you to place portions of my chronicle on paper for Hester, Fortescue. Does she ever mention me?"

"She always inquires after you."

"Has the girl one ray of kindly feeling for her grandfather?"

The question was carelessly asked, but there was an eager lighting of the eyes and a quick movement of the hand and head that belied the apparent indifference.

"I think Hester is very sorry for you," bluntly answered Basil.

"Sorry for me?"

"She thinks you are lonely and ill and in need of much she could and would do for you, were she allowed."

"Would she come here? live here while I need her?"

"I have no doubt she would consider it a duty if you claimed it."

"A duty? I do not care for the service of 'duty.' Is it in that spirit that you remain?"

"It is right for me to be here, sir, so long as you do not forbid my presence."

"But you would prefer to be elsewhere?" retorted the old man sarcastically.

"Yes and no."

"Explain!"

"Pray excuse me, grandfather; I am too weary to unravel my expressions of feeling."

"Basil, when do you intend to live to some pur-

pose? I shall no longer call you Fortescue. Is it your second name?"

"Yes, sir."

"It served you. I am an enigma even to myself. One year ago nothing would have induced me to see the son of Frederick Wilmerding under my roof. Is it that my spirit grows tamer as death approaches? What is death?" dreamily asked the old man, again leaning back in his chair.

There was no response.

"When I was in Russia," he continued in the same dreamy voice, "I heard, in one of the churches connected with the Troitsa monastery, a choir of invisible boy sopranos chanting with most angelic voices behind the silver screen, —

> He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. And I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life: but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

Again Mr. Harcourt was silent, recalling the thrillingly sweet and inspiring voices and the lofty, many-tinted domes and towers rising against the pale blue northern sky.

"Basil, when you reach the hour fast approaching for me, how will you meet it?"

"I do not know."

"How would Hester meet it?"

"She has faith."

"What a world this would have been had not death entered it!"

"Remove sickness, mental and physical, and death,

and life would have been a boon. With them, the sooner it is over the better!"

"And what then?"

"I do not know," replied Basil sullenly.

"I wish I did!" honestly answered his grandfather. "'Hold fast that which thou hast,' chanted those rare and lovely voices. I believe I possess very little — nothing that would be recognized beyond."

"Why don't you see a clergyman, grandfather?"

"I have thought of it. But those whom I have questioned did not illumine my darkness or give rest to my spirit."

"Hester would say" —

"What would Hester say?"

"That you were in fault, not they," returned Basil, with an abruptness which was the result of extreme mental disquiet.

"No one can give faith to another. 'All faith is the gift of God,' I have heard your mother say, Basil; but it was years and years ago. Why does it now recur to me?"

"My sister would say a good angel had hovered near and quickened memory."

"Oh, the years — the years I have wasted! I am wondering whether, in the life to come, I can recover what I have lost so culpably."

There was no response from Basil; nor did Mr. Harcourt seem to desire one. He lay back against his pillows musing.

The servant who had been dispatched with his note and a carriage returned, accompanied by Count Alexis and Olga.

"It is a pleasure — more than a pleasure, Mr. Harcourt, for my little daughter and myself to find so near us a friend of my father. I seem even to remember your face, my dear sir. Were you not in Moscow one Easter?"

"Yes."

"I was sure of it! Little lad as I then was, I have never forgotten the enthusiasm of the American gentleman who was so fascinated by our mighty and most melodious bells."

"Their music was a revelation!" responded Mr. Harcourt eagerly, fresh strength seeming to come on the entrance of Count Viazemski, who was linked with the long-ago visit to the most picturesque and imposing city of the North.

"The Easter of which you spoke I can never forget. From the lowest story of the tower of Ivan the Great to the top, overarched by the golden dome and lofty cross, the bells rang in unison. 'Christ is risen!' pealed in melodious thunder from the lowest bell; 'Christ is risen!' sonorously reiterated each successive tier; 'Christ is risen!' rang aloft the two silver bells beneath the dome."

Mr. Harcourt was all animation, his voice eloquent with the enthusiasm that revived whenever his Russian visit was the theme.

"I regret to find you so much of an invalid. I would press you to return with me, were it otherwise," said Count Viazemski, pained by the evident traces of protracted suffering, mental and physical, that had been the fate of his father's friend.

"I shall see Russia no more; nor, after a brief space, the daylight of earth. And then — what?"

Mr. Harcourt grasped the hand of his guest. Olga, half terrified, glanced from one to the other, the emaciated, pallid appearance of the strange gentleman touching her both to pity and fear.

"Remember the message of the Easter bells," responded Count Alexis eagerly but tenderly, "for you and me: 'Christ is risen!' Why? That he may uplift us from the night of death and bear us through its shadow to the dawn. Oh, believe it! believe it!"

Olga was startled as she heard, in her father's final entreaty, the very words of the saints in The Beleagured City, returned to earth with the heavenly message of peace and pardon to the penitents of Semur. She gazed on her father and Mr. Harcourt; and when the former knelt to offer a prayer for the almost passing soul, she sank on her knees trembling with sympathetic emotion.

"Ah, you have brought light into my darkness!" exclaimed the old man brokenly. "I will go on chanting the Easter message till the stone is rolled away from my sepulchre of gloom and doubt and I arise a free man from an almost lifelong sleep of death."

"'Christ is risen'; 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.' Hold that truth fast, dear old friend; it will bring you into quiet waters and a safe haven."

"Your words seem the conclusion of the Easter message!" cried Mr. Harcourt, with brightening

eyes. Then relapsing into sudden doubt and dread, he murmured: "But you do not know my life. How can I, who have never sought aught but earth, be pardoned, when at the last only death is left to me?"

"Life eternal, you mean; not death — that brief moment! But even that seeming ending is not yet here. To you is permitted the blessing of restitution, if need of restitution there may be."

Mr. Harcourt started; then sank back in his chair.

"If restitution will work only evil after I am gone, it would prove a curse, not a blessing." His eyes rested on Basil, who became as pale as his grandfather.

"I have thought over an act of restitution since I have been lying here. For years my will has resisted all the efforts conscience made to melt an iron resolution. Lately much within me has altered. With a clear mind and broken spirit I have renounced — May God pardon all as freely as I do!" he abruptly concluded.

His eyes closed and one of the heart attacks from which he suffered after any emotion, smote him as with the unconsciousness of death.

Basil signed to Count Viazemski and Olga to withdraw, while he and one of the men servants and the physician, who had just entered, rapidly applied the necessary restoratives.

As the sun sank the weather changed. The lovely day was gone as a dream, whirled away by gathering clouds and a northeast wind that tossed the sea into angry waves and thundering breakers. The gale increased, but no rain fell from the sky curtained with

intense gloom. Under this starless, moonless dome, the water surged frantically, and the tide ran above its highest boundary.

Mr. Harcourt, feebly drifting back to consciousness, listened to the beating surf and howling wind.

Mount Desert Island, with its many cedars, hemlocks, firs, pines, larches, birches, and beeches, grand mountains, deep gorges, valleys, meadows, trout streams, and lakes, was responding to the wild cry of the gale — wind-swept and seeming to palpitate in the fierce grasp that sought to wrest it from its home on the coast of Maine.

"What a night to pass away in!" faintly exclaimed Mr. Harcourt. "Oh, that I may not go forth on that long journey whence no traveler returns, in such a tempest! Is it a long journey?" questioned he of himself, his voice sinking to a lower key. "I have sometimes thought it was but a moment — as we count time — before the spirit is at home. Basil!"

"I am here, grandfather."

"Read the Fifty-first Psalm to me."

Though in no mood to comply, Basil obeyed immediately. As he finished the psalm, there was a lull in the gale, as if its strong winds were faltering in their onward rush through the sky. The answering cry of the sea was less wild.

"The storm is passing over," said Mr. Harcourt. "I am prepared for the night, and Dawson and Clinton are both with me. You go, Basil, and learn what havoc this rainless storm has wrought along the coast."

Basil sprang to his feet, nervous and eager to be in motion.

"Ha! the moon is out and the sky clear! If you really do not need me, grandfather, a rushing walk would be delightful!"

"I do not need you."

Away went Basil, meeting crowds of tourists bent on the same quest. In the brilliant moonlight sea, earth and sky were luminous. The pinions of the gale were furled; but the Atlantic was not yet calm. The towpath and that leading to Schooner Head were thronged. Basil chose the latter. Passing through the wicket gate to cross the meadow leading to the Spouting Horn, a scene of wild confusion met his sight where, toward the gigantic head, raving billows madly leaped and dashed, and broke against the mighty cliff. The exhilarating, briny air, the tumult of the water, the moon gliding as a queen amid the flying clouds that parted to let her pass and gaze on the heaving sea, so enchanted Basil that, had he been alone, he would have shouted and sung in his exultation.

The crowd gathered instead of lessening, and he was presently aware that Count Viazemski was at his side asking after his grandfather. Reassuring him as to his condition, he made an excuse to pass on, for he saw the De Rosamberts and Hester just behind. Basil wanted to be alone with the night. So unstrung was he, so oppressed by the memory of his dangerous, useless, and reckless act, that solitude amid unknown numbers — where he need not cross the

path of those he knew — was a necessity. Rushing back, he sought the rocky road leading from Bar Harbor to Cromwell's Harbor. Many were moving there, but not one face or voice was familiar. Ever forming and dissolving, snow-white waves, like flocks of sheep, sought to clamber over the rocks; but, footing lost, slipped back, frothing, moaning, into the sea. Basil, too excited to rest, strode to and fro, gazing over the tossing, moonlit water.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AFTER THE GALE.

THE morning after the gale the sunlight was glorious, the azure of the sky vivid, and the waves joyous, which in snowy jets of foam leaped into the embrace of the grand old evergreens drooping along the shore. The vast expanse of the Atlantic was one beauteous scene of forming and dissolving blue-green billows crested with silver. Seaweed — crimson, orange, purple, and blue, intertwined with kelp and sea-grass and frosted with gleaming little shells — lay on the sand or clung to the rocks and cliffs where wind and wave had tossed it.

"'Nature is in glorious health — sunshine in her eyes, light fantastic cloud-images passing through her brain, her breath coming and going in soft breezes perfumed with the scents of meadows and wild flowers; and her green robe shining in the motions of her gladness,'" quoted Miss Patty blithely. "On the shore her breath is 'the mingled salt and balm of the transparent air.'"

Such an exultant, singing, shining morning! Smiling faces were seen on every side, and many were longing to be out on the bay, or down on the towpath, or up on the cliffs overlooking Schooner and Great Head.

Jack and Arthur Carroll, elate and eager to be in a

sailboat careening over the sea, had already gratified their desire and were passing Bayview Cottage, where they looked in vain for Helen Armitage on the broad veranda.

"Why did you not bring your cousin, Jack?"

"I did invite her and the little Russian; but they were going somewhere with the De Rosamberts and Count Alexis. I say, Carroll, suppose we run out beyond Egg Rock Lighthouse and see the codfishing."

"I am ready! What would New Orleanists say to such a morning in their tropical heat and the steam from their marsh lands?"

"And what would Mount Deserters say to their balmy air and luscious fruits in winter, when here they are thigh-deep in snow, and gales are raving along the coast? Halloo!" cried Jack, as he nearly ran down a canoe in which sat an Indian boy and girl, merrily paddling.

"You two infants have no business out here!" he said savagely. "Go up the bay to Bar Harbor, or your encampment, just as fast as you can."

The boy and girl laughed and chattered a remonstrance in their own tongue, but prepared to obey.

"I'll give you this, if you'll only go!" said Jack, tossing some silver coins into the canoe. It was speedily headed for the Indian village, and brimful of pride and joy the smiling, dusky faces vanished on their way.

"Cousin Constance must christen that small Indian she has captured," said Carroll.

Jack laughed.

"I told my cousin Nelly— Halloo! more surprises! What has Olga?"

The child clasped a beautiful Pomeranian, whose snowy fur glistened in the sunlight. Its deerlike eyes, short, erect, pointed ears, full ruff, long plume curling over its left hip, fringed paws, and delicate feet proclaimed it a pure specimen of that charming breed.

"O neighbor! Rustoff has come!"

"So I perceive," said Jack, more coolly than he felt. "Where did he come from?"

"From Russia. He made the voyage with us."

"Where has Rustoff been hidden since you have been in Bar Harbor?"

"In Boston. I was under a solemn promise to papa not to mention or beseech for him. But I have missed him! Ah!" leaning her face tenderly against the snowy head.

"Why then is he here now?"

"My good behavior"—

"Humph!" retorted Jack teasingly.

"There you go!" returned Olga. "You'll never believe that I"—

But the boats had glided apart and she left her sentence unfinished.

"The Pomeranian must have arrived after I left Bayview with you last evening, Carroll," said Jack, longing for another glimpse of the beautiful, spirited creature.

"Olga!" he called. But the Sea Gull had receded too far over the blue water for his voice to reach her.

Rustoff's mistress was at the moment watching a

pretty gull preparing to fish. It took countless curves, then, watching its chance with unerring eye, swept low above the water. A sudden dive, and it soared up from the clear waves, triumphantly bearing a mackerel shining in its green and gold.

"Look! look, Rustoff! The sea gull is flying off with that beautiful fish! You have seen what Vassili and Dimitri have never seen."

The Pomeranian had reached his paradise on regaining his mistress. All other facts were as nothing. Under that silvery fur beat a heart that, after the manner of his race, knew but one deep and lifelong devotion.

The party were on their way to the Anemone Cave, where the tide permitted entrance at that hour. The night before how the wind-lashed surf had leaped up through Spouting Horn many feet above the tallest trees on the cliff! Now all was calm, a gentle surge caressing the wild flowers blooming in thickets on the bank. How had they lived through that mad frolic of wind and wave? Yet there they were, smiling and blooming, serene as the morning air.

"Oh! look at those bowlders scattered along the beach by the cave! Why cannot we have our luncheon there?" asked Meta.

"And see those exquisite white birches on that grassy bank above the cave; and that tall crag that resembles the towers of some of our old French chateaux!" exclaimed Gudule. "Only in France ivy, not lichen, makes them green and beautiful."

Leaving the Sea Gull, they clambered over the rocks and up the beach to enter the fairy cave that

SPOUTING HORN,
At Schooner Head.

Count Viazemski and Olga then saw for the first time.

The floor of the rock-pool was radiant with lovely hued anemones, as was every cleft, clearly seen in the golden-green light flooding the huge cavern.

"How did they like the roar of the wind and the foaming waves last night?" asked Olga of Rustoff as she stood within its great, framing arch to gaze out at the beautiful picture of sapphire sea and sky.

"O Rustoff! what a first day this is for thee!" watching him leap from rock to rock. "See the sides of the cave — they are such a soft, deep red, streaked with many colors. Oh, look! is n't that just like lacework — all points and meshes! That was done by the sea. And in this sunny corner are the blue and crimson starfish."

Rustoff barked rapturously, thus expressing the joy of his heart at reunion with his beloved mistress; but the Anemone Cave did not charm him as it did her. He rolled over and over on the smooth pebbles and would not turn his beautiful eyes in the direction in which his mistress enthusiastically pointed. But he came bounding to be caressed and to quench his thirst when she knelt by one of the shining rivulets of icy water tinkling down from a fairy spring, which flowed crystal clear, in the shadow of the firs above the sea, away up where the arbutus had scented the air and where now graceful ferns and wild roses were growing together in loving amity.

"Oh, what joy to be at Mount Desert, and to have papa and Rustoff to see it all with me!" cried Olga.

"Oh! there are harebells!" as Monsieur de Rosambert, who had climbed up the height above the cave, came down with an azure bunch which he gave to Hester.

"Before leaving Mount Desert, I shall gather a root with its native soil and carry it across the sea, hoping it will grow in France for me."

No one heard this hope save Hester, and she, unconscious of the memory these flowers would always possess for her friend, smiled and said she thought, if carefully guarded, they might bear the sea voyage bravely.

"I" — but what Henri de Rosambert would have eagerly responded was unuttered; for Gudule and Count Viazemski were approaching, and his opportunity was gone.

As they entered Bar Harbor, Basil Wilmerding was seen standing on the wharf. Hester exclaimed joyfully, and her brother clasped her hand, saying that his grandfather was more comfortable.

But it was Mademoiselle de Rosambert he had come to seek. Inexplicably to himself, yet with a very decided intention of finding her, he had walked over from Ullescliffe. His varied moods interested Gudule, so that when he offered himself as her escort down the towpath she did not decline.

"I am very restless to-day," he began frankly, "and your influence is calming. My coming to you is perfectly selfish. You cannot care to hear me talk; but will you talk to me?"

"On what theme?" asked Gudule, smiling.

"I cannot read, write, or sit still this morning.

Why are you always so calm? Are you really calm — undisturbed?"

"Just now I am."

"But you do have moments of unrest, and therefore can sympathize with me. Your brother is never untranquil?"

"I am not sure; but he can control moods, and the effort brings him straight back to calm and sunshine. I believe it is very unfortunate to think much of one's self."

"But if you have done — I mean, if you are so constituted that self is a very disagreeable companion" —

"Find some one to work for — to think of; some one who really needs you. Oh, there are so many! I feel often as if I ought to go straight back to France! I am sure I have had a sufficient holiday. But my dear brother is only now beginning to gain strength. I try to reassure myself that to remain in this beautiful Mount Desert for his sake is not selfish."

"Certainly not! Especially when there are so many suffering ones around you."

Gudule glanced at her companion, surprised and touched by the evidence he bore of mental disquietude.

"It is not sorrow" — she began; then, much confused at having spoken her thought, she turned her face toward the sea.

"What is 'not sorrow'?" asked Basil.

"Forgive me for understanding that you are in trouble," instantly responded Gudule with her usual candor.

"I am only too glad you should know it!" cried Basil. "From the first moment I saw you I was sure — One has intuitive perceptions concerning persons, you know."

"Then may I speak frankly?"

"As frankly as you choose."

"You are restless from anxiety; but sorrow has not touched you. You have never known sorrow — or not lately."

"Not since my mother died."

"Ah, forgive me! No grief can surpass that," answered Gudule, compassionately.

Basil, struggling amid many harassing memories, was silent for a second.

"How strange that you should have read my face so correctly!" he said presently. "It is anxiety — not sorrow — that now distracts me."

"If you confessed the secret of disquietude, might not that calm the restlessness?"

"Yes; if I dared talk it over. But there is no one — not even you!" he added impulsively.

"But your sister" —

"Hester! She would be grieved and horrified beyond expression."

"Grieved she might be; but not horrified. It seems to me that to shrink from another for any act of his is to convict one's self of narrowness both of heart and mind. Self-knowledge should at least impart sympathy and a charitable judgment."

"I knew you would say that! Therefore I was drawn to seek you. Your censure would not be bitter and sharp — even though you might disapprove."

"If you cannot remove anxiety by confession, then accept it. Shrinking from mental pain increases its weight fourfold. You allow me to say this — the truth — to you?"

"I not only allow it, but I thank you. By a wild, reckless act I have brought on myself all this burden. I cannot undo the deed, nor can I confess it. I must accept and bear what I have wrought."

"You are entirely sure you cannot undo it?"

"Quite sure."

They sat down on a rock. Gudule, very sorry for her companion, was silent; and Basil, touched by her sympathy, was also speechless.

All the gracious day was singing and shining around them. Children's merry voices rang up from the shore. Friends, in groups of two or three, were walking, or sitting on the rocks. The blue mirror of the sea was still gay with the white sails of fishing craft gliding down the bay.

Basil spoke abruptly: "According to your advice — and because it is yours — I shall accept this torturing anxiety as the reaping due my sowing. It is my fate."

"God is above every fate," said Gudule.

"But you believe we reap what we sow?"

"Certainly. But there is repentance and forgiveness for even an evil sowing."

"Man cannot forgive or forget."

"That is the joy of possessing a heavenly Father who can do both, and heal us while forgiving," responded Gudule brokenly, her heart melting with pity for the poor, white, stricken face at her side.

"You are one of his good angels!" cried Basil. "Do you know you give me faith and courage to believe in God? If you, a mortal, can be so compassionate in your judgments, how much more tender must He be who is the source of all this gentle goodness in you! I have led a wild, reckless life. I have wasted my property and wrecked poor Hester's. I wish you to know me as I am. Then, if you can still pity me, I shall believe that, far away in the future, there may be divine forgiveness even for me."

"Not 'far away in the future,' but now."

Basil shook his head.

"There must be expiation and restitution first. Do you care to know that at last I am really penitent? I was angry, distracted — anything but penitent! Now I am sorry; and I only wish I owned as blameless a conscience as I know you possess."

"Ah, I am not blameless."

"Compared with me, you are as unsullied as snow! Do not contradict me. It does me good to know that you, noble and true, can yet pity me. You have helped me, Mademoiselle de Rosambert."

Gudule's eyes were brimming with tears and she could not speak.

For another half hour they loitered by the sea; then Basil accompanied her to her hotel, returning to Ullescliffe with much of his unrest banished, though far from being at ease in his grandfather's presence.

CHAPTER XXV.

ABOVE THE NAIAD'S POOL.

THE day of all days on which to enjoy mountain scenery is when the mighty hills are dappled with sunshine and shade. A lovely, luminous ripple plays upon their sides and flickers airily down the deep and tranquil gorges. The valleys smile in this sweet and sudden radiance, or dream in the soft, transparent shadow that follows the illumination.

On such a day, the friends of Miss Patty drove along the Schooner Head road, with the intention of ascending Newport Mountain on the side nearest Bar Harbor. A mile from the town they left the main road to enter a shady forest path.

There the carriages were dismissed; and Arthur Carroll and Jack Bolton, who knew every inch of the way, led their friends down the path toward an exquisite little crystal-clear pool. This they must cross on substantial stepping-stones before arriving at the base of the mountain. Sweet was the stillness, piny the fragrance of the embowered spot where golden light and woodland shadows played bewitchingly.

Olga sprang over the stones, closely accompanied by Rustoff, his joyous bark echoing his mistress' rapture in the scene. Ascending the mountain from the other side, by Otter Creek, they had lost this pretty scene.

"It is as I have felt again and again," exclaimed Hester; "all around us are such lovely pictures which we lose in spite of ourselves. And it will always be so!"

"But we are, nevertheless, finding these nooks constantly," responded Henri de Rosambert.

"I am ashamed of my mood! Let me be thankful for the joy of to-day and trust it will not be withheld on the morrow."

"The Hester we knew has returned to us," said Madame de Chavigni, smiling, and holding Zelma's hand as Judith easily bore the child's light weight up the path. The dusky hair, in which nestled a crimson ribbon, the white robe, the daintily shod feet, and cheeks the tint of a pomegranate, softly brightening the olive coloring of the face and its dark dreamy eyes, gave Hester another picture to remember and associate with that day long after the friends were separated.

As Constance de Chavigni gazed tenderly on the child, the little creature responded with a smile most radiant and beautiful.

"See, see!" cried Zelma, watching the squirrels leaping from branch to branch and tree to tree, or pausing to twinkle down upon her from some overhanging bough. "Hark!" she exclaimed again, as the note of the partridge struck her quick ear; while Rustoff's gay bark sounded away up the path accompanied by Olga's merry peals of laughter.

As she gazed on the well-worn road curving up through a rich growth of overarching trees, Hester

thought what a pretty little poem might be written on the many footsteps that had gone, and were to come, over the path she was then following.

"There will be no one happier than I, in spite of hindering causes," said she, after expressing her thought to Henri de Rosambert.

"Ah, I am glad of that!" he responded eagerly. "You do not know how I hope your life will be rich with blessings. You can suffer as keenly as you enjoy. But if trials come, oh, remember they are a proof of God's love, who can bear to send grief when we need it. We, so weak in our affection, would only give sunshine; but he sends the necessary shadows, which are as enriching as the light."

"Can that be possible?"

"I know it; both from my own experience and the experience of my friends. Nature proves this clearly as do our lives. An English friend gave me a copy of Keble. Listen an instant to one of his thoughts: —

> None of all the wreaths ye prize
> But was nursed by weeping skies.
> Keen March winds, soft April showers,
> Braced the roots, embalmed the flowers.
> So, if e'er that second spring
> Her green robe o'er thee shall fling,
> Stern self-mastery, tearful prayer
> Must the way of bliss prepare.
> How else should earth's flowerets prove
> Meet for those pure crowns above?

Hester mused. In her young life the only pain she had known had been inflicted by those who were indifferent. Thus associated, the results had been

hardening, embittering. But the lines of Keble gave another interpretation to the trials ordained for us. Who could doubt the love of Madame de Chavigni for Zelma? Yet Hester knew that, deeply as she would grieve to bring tears to the child's eyes or a quiver to the sensitive little mouth, she would not hesitate to reprove her, if thus alone she could save her charge from a deeper sorrow.

The forest now became more and more open, the larger growths yielding to small pines as the friends emerged into the full sunlight.

"Follow me!" shouted Jack Bolton, "or you will easily miss the path and plunge down into a ravine hidden by foliage. It was here Talbot and I started a deer last summer. They love this spot — the royal creatures!"

Turning southward, they had soon but a ledge between them and the summit.

"Oh, I see Green Mountain House peeping over Dry Mountain!" cried Helen.

"Yes; and there are the rocks with the pole in the center!" exclaimed Meta. "Jack, Arthur, and Olga are already on the summit. Give me your hand, Gudule."

A sharp, delightful rush and scramble and they had gained the top of Newport Mountain!

The precipices on the western and eastern sides of Newport are so steep that one is deceived in their height above the sea. In the rarefied air the various points, islands, and lighthouses seem close to the mountain.

"Look up Frenchman's Bay to Sorrento, Olga!" cried Jack. "How many sailboats can you count?"

Olga and Rustoff sped in his direction, the former trying to number the boats while assuring the Pomeranian that this was another grand day in his life!

"The lofty summit of Green Mountain hides Somes' Sound and the western part of Mount Desert from our view," said Miss Patty. "Come this way, Hester, and you will see Cranberry Island lying off in the south."

"From this eastern side what a precipice overhangs Schooner Head road!"

"Ah, I can never forget the awful accident the first year I visited Bar Harbor!" said Miss Patty. "Do not go so near that edge, my dear Hester! It was just there the young girl fell over the precipice!"

Henri de Rosambert extended his hand involuntarily.

Hester smiled and obeyed the request of her old friend by stepping back from the edge of the cliff, from which the grand view of Schooner Head jutting out into the sky and sea so fascinated her.

"You must all come to the beautiful little pond!" shouted Jack. "It is on the southern side of the ridge, lower down, full of black bass and encircled by pretty wooded slopes."

Laughing and talking, Miss Patty's party allowed Jack to pilot the way.

There luncheon was served, while Arthur and Jack, eager to fish, turned their backs on the fine collation.

Olga, excessively indignant, expostulated in vain.

"You are both naughty neighbors!" she cried.

"I can't bear to see those bass flapping in the basket! How pretty they are with the long, black lines on their silvery sides! Oh, do stop fishing and do as you would be done by."

"You 'll eat them to-morrow morning."

"Indeed! I 'll never eat a fish I 've seen caught; you ought to know that by this time!" cried Olga furiously.

"Olga!" The low, clear tones of Count Alexis' voice checked his little daughter's wrath. She bowed her head over Rustoff's silver collar marked with three small gold letters — "R. D. V."

Jack, furtively watching her, whispered a few words to Arthur, and then both put up their fishing tackle, after tumbling the bass back into the pond.

Up jumped Olga, all smiles and animation. "Now come to your luncheon, neighbors! I 'll give you everything you like out of those fine, large baskets."

"It 's a shame to mar a pleasure party," said Jack, frankly. "When Carroll and I wish to fish, we 'll go alone."

"If neighbors *must* fish, they had better be alone!" rejoined Olga.

"Are we friends once more?" asked Jack.

"Yes," responded Olga, beaming and happy, ministering to those who had proved their desire to please her.

Jack and Arthur sought to wile Rustoff from following his mistress' steps; but the loyal heart beneath that snowy fur could not be enticed even for a moment.

Half an hour later, Hester, established in a sheltered nook on a safe portion of the ledge overlooking the Atlantic, was laughing while she tried to teach Zelma and Olga, at whose feet lay Rustoff, to repeat a few lines she had just remembered. The efforts of the former were, of course, an utter failure; but the little Russian, who never succumbed to a difficulty, finally recited her lesson with great triumph and delight.

The other friends were grouped according to the fancy of the moment — talking or silent. Henri de Rosambert, standing near Hester and the children, was much amused, and also committed the quaint old lines: —

> On Tintock's tap there is a mist,
> And in the mist there is a kist,
> And in the kist there is a cap;
> Tak' up the cap and sup the drap,
> And set the cap on Tintock's tap!

"'Cap'?" asked Olga.

"That is the Scotch for cup; and 'kist' means a chest."

"Thank you! Now I'll run and see if my neighbor can learn it," cried Olga, dancing away with Rustoff, while Zelma was brought back to Madame de Chavigni by Judith.

"There is something hidden in your little quaint verse, Miss Wilmerding, as there was in the story I told Olga in Duck Brook Glen," said Henri de Rosambert.

"It means a great deal that is most beautiful," she answered. "Would you really care to hear what Dr.

John Brown thinks of it? His thoughts have upheld and inspirited me often."

"I care exceedingly to hear."

"I believe I can remember his very words," said Hester: —

To gain what is really truth, you must climb some Tintock Hill of difficulty you see from afar; and you must mainly climb alone. You start for your Tintock with an object — to get into the mist and get the drop — and you do this chiefly because you have the truth-hunting instinct. You may have many a fall, many a false step. You may lose your temper; but the finding it makes you keep it the better next time. You become more patient and yet more eager; and not infrequently you come to a standstill and have to turn for your life.

Also, you are forever mistaking the top; when, behold! there it is farther off than ever, and you may have to humble yourself in a hidden valley before reascending. So on you go with face to the sky, gazing far away athwart the widening horizon. The world below lessens, coming up to you as a whole, with its just proportions and relations.

Every effort is a victory and a joy — taking you nearer the clouds and heavens, and farther from the world below. You may note that the more you move up toward the pure blue depths of the sky, the farther off, the more withdrawn into its own clear infinity does it seem.

As you reach the upper height, you find it less difficult, less steep than lower down; often so level that you can run off in an ecstasy to the crowning cairn, to the sacred mist, within whose cloudy shrine rests the unknown, blessed secret — some great truth of God and of your own soul: something that is not to be gotten for gold or toil down on the plain, but may be taken here; something that no man can give or take away; something that you must work for and learn yourself; and which, once yours, is safe beyond the chances and changes of time.

You enter that luminous cloud, stooping as a little child — as indeed all the best kingdoms are entered — and pressing on you come in the shadowy light of the long-dreamt-of ark — the chest. It is shut, it is locked; but behold! you possess the key. That

key is the love of truth. With it a little child may open it, and often does — it goes so sweetly, so with a will.

You lift the lid; you are all alone; the cloud is all around you with a tender light of its own, shutting out the outer world, filling you with joy — as if alone, and yet not alone. You see the cup within, and in it the one crystalline drop — glowing, tremulous, as if alive. You take up the cup, you reverently sup the drop; it enters into and becomes the essence of yourself. In humble gratitude and love you gently replace the cup. It will gather again — it is forever gathering. No man, woman, or child ever opened that chest and found no drop in the cup. It might not be the very drop expected; it will serve their purpose none the worse — often much better.

And now, bending down, you shut the lid that you hear locking itself afresh against all but the sacred key. You leave the now hallowed mist. You look out on the old familiar world again that looks both new and old; you descend, throwing the light of the present on the past; and past and present set against the boundless future.

But don't think your own hand has gotten you the victory; and that you had no unseen, and it may be unfelt and unacknowledged, hand guiding you up the hill. It is God's doing that you are led to the right hill and the right path; for there are other Tintocks with other kists and other drops. Work out, therefore, your own knowledge with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do, and to know his good pleasure. There is no explaining and no disbelieving this.

"Thank you! thank you! The explanation of the verse is very beautiful; and true as beautiful. I'll remember it always, in far-away France, Mademoiselle Wilmerding. 'It is God's doing that you are led to the right hill and the right path; for there are other Tintocks, with other kists and other drops' of dew," quoted Henri de Rosambert.

He was silent several seconds, then turned to his companion: —

"May I tell you? Do you remember the day I

found you on the shore and brought you back to Bar Harbor?"

"Yes."

"You remember we saw our first harebells that day growing in a crevice of the rocky archway. As I gazed at them I felt that I had awakened to your presence and influence as I fancied the rock must have awakened and quivered with happiness in the new and sweet delight of every delicate shadow cast on it by the lovely, airy flowers. I love you, Hester. Will you return with me to France as my wife, to share my life and my work?"

Hester was silent for some moments; then she spoke simply and frankly: —

"You are my kind friend; I have not thought of you in any other way. To share your life and your noble work — how can I say yes when" —

"Hester! Hester!" called Miss Patty, coming across the ridge accompanied by Madame de Chavigni, Gudule, and Count Alexis. "I am so sorry; but you must go at once. Ah, do not be frightened."

"What is it?" breathlessly asked Hester, springing to her feet and opening the note from Dr. Duncan that Miss Patty handed her. It contained an entreaty to come at once to Ullescliffe. Basil had been thrown from his horse. The doctor hoped he was not seriously injured; but he asked for his sister incessantly. Mr. Harcourt begged her to come immediately.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ULLESCLIFFE.

THE descent of Newport Mountain was accomplished rapidly. All were full of sympathy for Hester, whose pale face and self-control so appealed to them. She, fearing some portion of the truth had been withheld, could not fly fast enough to her brother's side. Poor Basil! Her heart melted over him.

Accompanied by Miss Patty, Henri de Rosambert, and Count Alexis, she reached Ullescliffe in the shortest possible time, to find Basil unconscious and her grandfather in painful agitation. The presence of Count Alexis soothed him; and Hester was free to seek her brother at once, while the nurse and Dr. Duncan conferred a few moments apart.

In another hour Basil had lost the semblance of death. Opening his eyes he called for his sister, who, tenderly responding, clasped his hand in hers.

"That is all I want," he murmured, at last content because the one being who breathed of home and early days was with him.

There was little to do for Basil; but a nurse was in attendance to relieve Hester and to follow carefully the doctor's directions. For days he remained prostrate, suffering intensely in back and head, but unwontedly patient and tranquil.

"I needed just this, Hester," he said. "Body and mind were exhausted, yet unable to rest an instant. Now I must lie still and some calm may come to me if I do not resist it. What did Mademoiselle de Rosambert say?"

"Nothing; but she sent this large, delicious bunch of pale pink tea roses to-day by her brother when he came to inquire."

"How kind! One likes to be remembered. I have been inattentive to the suffering; but I shall be less remiss in future. When do the De Rosamberts return to France?"

"In a few weeks."

"Shall you not miss them?"

"Exceedingly!"

"O Hester! if I only now possessed what I so foolishly, recklessly squandered, what a happy future would be ours! I have a daydream, but — Does grandfather ever mention me?"

"Not often; but he feels more kindly, I am sure."

"Why are you sure?"

"His face expresses interest and his voice sympathy."

"Will he do the only right and just thing for me?" eagerly asked Basil.

"Ah, that is another matter."

"Then he has not really repented, in spite of what he said to Count Alexis!" and Basil proceeded to narrate the conversation at the Russian gentleman's first visit.

"How do you know, Basil, that to repent truly is

to reform?" asked Hester, joyful at this indication of a new view of life in her brother.

"I have thought thus lately, more and more convinced that it is the only proof of earnestness a man can give."

"O dear Basil! your words rejoice me."

"But do not yet build on my words, Hester," he answered affectionately. "I may know far better than I have the desire or will to perform. Are you great friends with Mademoiselle de Rosambert?"

"We are good friends."

"Don't you love her?"

"Not yet," answered Hester, smiling.

"How slow you women are! When you so rarely meet any one as lovely in mind, heart, and face as she, yet you hesitate! Of course you know she is faultless?"

"I can readily believe that — so far as any human being can be faultless."

"I had a conversation with her the day you returned from the Anemone Cave. Don't you remember we walked down the towpath?"

"Yes."

"Be grateful to her, Hester. She has comforted me more than any one — save you and our dear mother."

"Gudule?"

"Yes; Gudule. What a pretty name! I was in a desperate state that day. She calmed and steadied me, giving me hope and courage, besides showing me the heart of a noble woman in the way she

commented on what I had impulsively confided to her kindness."

"Indeed, indeed I am most grateful."

"I was sure you would be!" responded he, much gratified, and relapsing into silence that he might think of Gudule undisturbed.

"Please place her flowers where I can see and inhale them," said Basil as Hester rose in obedience to her grandfather's summons.

"Now I shall think and sleep. Do not leave him if he desires you to remain. I am very comfortable."

Away went Hester, marveling for the hundredth time at finding herself where she had never dreamed of being. There was no doubt as to Mr. Harcourt's intense enjoyment of her presence. His face brightened and he extended his hand eagerly, affectionately.

"Thus my little Lucy used to come in smiling to me long ago," he said, gazing tenderly at his granddaughter's lovely face, so like her mother's, whose prayer was at last answered in the reconciliation of to-day. "On your first visit to Ullescliffe, Hester, you said you did not care for my wealth, but you did care for my affection. The indignant tones of your young, fresh, honest voice rang in my ears for weeks, and the remembrance of your wounded heart, shown in your tearful eyes, flushed cheeks, and quivering lips, was ever before me. When I am gone, Hester, you will find I have loved you — for my Lucy's sake — more than you dreamed, my child."

Hester, touched and pained by the old man's

emotion, could respond only by the expression of her face.

"If I could recover, would you go away — live with me — be as my Lucy was, Hester?" eagerly cried he.

"Yes, grandfather. And Basil" —

"Don't mention him! He is his father's son! Once he wrecked all you possessed; he would do it again. I know him — know him!" fiercely exclaimed Mr. Harcourt, the veins on his forehead swelling with bitter resentment.

"O grandfather, Basil has changed in much! He would never repeat the past — never!"

"I would not trust him! Let us speak of some pleasanter theme."

Distressed and indignant, Hester was silent

"Now there's a cloud over my sunshine!" exclaimed the old man. "I am as sensitive to mental as to atmospheric changes."

Hester smiled, melting into compassion in spite of herself at his look and tone.

"Oh, to be free, Hester, from this bondage of feebleness and pain! It seems to me the rarest, sweetest word in the English language — freedom! I was in Saint Petersburg, February 19, 1861, when Czar Alexander II issued his Proclamation of Freedom to twenty-two millions of serfs. Never can I forget that hour and my exultation in that deliverance! It still imparts an enthusiasm to tired brain and heart that events of to-day do not give."

Mr. Harcourt's face was radiant as he leaned back in his chair.

"Ah, it was a good deed — the noblest deed, Hester!"

"Oh, tell me, grandfather! Tell me all you can remember."

"All? That would weary you, my child. So quietly had the czar bestowed his infinite blessing that the Russian serfs were liberated before they were aware. It was on a Sunday morning. The sky was a stainless azure; the air was so dry and cold that the snow crackled beneath the feet. I was staying with Count Arminioff and was accompanying him that morning to the Cathedral of Saint Isaac. But the streets were so densely thronged and his carriage was forced to pause so constantly, that we at last descended into the midst of the heart-stirring scene.

"Upon every wall of Saint Petersburg, upon the humblest fences as on the most splendid palaces, appeared immense white placards bearing the czar's decree of freedom to his serfs. Thronging around these, those who could read read aloud to those who could not, the glorious tidings that in Russia there were no longer serfs, but men!"

"O grandfather, that is a day and scene worth remembering!" as the old man suddenly sat erect in his chair, his fine countenance flushed by the stirring memory.

"The pavement, the steps, and the square in which Saint Isaac's stands were so crowded, that to enter by any one of its four doors seemed an impossibility; but Count Arminioff was a favorite of the people, and little by little a path was made for us through the

vast multitude and we were borne into the cathedral. Does Saint Isaac's suggest a mental picture, Hester?"

"No, grandfather. I know nothing of Russian churches."

The old man leaned back in his chair and spoke with closed eyes while memory restored the scene.

"Gorgeous gloom was within Saint Isaac's cathedral. Great lamps burn there night and day before the sacred pictures and illumine the rare and costly marbles, mosaics, and columns of malachite and lapis lazuli upholding the regal screen of gold and inwrought gems before the inmost shrine. So colossal is the architecture, so magnificent the proportions of the mighty dome, so brilliant the gilding, the tints of the frescoes, the polish of the marble pavement and the glorious beauty of the iconostasis concealing the sacred inner sanctuary, that one is dazzled and dumb before what man has wrought to manifest his reverence for the Deity.

"I recall distinctly the three lofty doors of the screen," continued Mr. Harcourt, "the central portal giving access to the sanctuary. All the jewels mentioned in the Revelation of Saint John gleam in that glowing front of gold and silver — jasper, malachite, porphyry, and agate. Faces of the four evangelists, the Angel Gabriel, and the Virgin Mary are framed amid that richness."

Again Mr. Harcourt paused, while Hester waited eagerly.

"During the service that central door is opened to

reveal the form of Christ with lifted hand in benediction. There can be no more endearing or beautiful conception of that divine figure. It is life size, exquisitely painted on glass, and forms the mighty window at the back of the sanctuary. The form seems to float in the sky, its tender brilliancy of color contrasting wonderfully with the twilight reigning in the cathedral.

"It stirred me, Hester, and deepened the effect of the solemn occasion for which we were gathered — to praise God for his blessed gift of freedom through his servant the czar! All around me were the reverent, ecstatic, blue-eyed, fair-haired Russians on their knees, silent as death, waiting for the reading of Alexander II's proclamation that confirmed the liberty of twenty-two million Russian serfs. The people trembled, a murmur ran through the vast cathedral, heads bowed lower in prayer and praise, and I heard the fervent cry, 'Glory to our Saviour!' Free Russia, before thanking and blessing their beloved czar, returned thanksgivings to God, who had made Alexander II their deliverer!"

"Oh, if I had been there!" cried Hester with tears of sympathy and delight.

"Ah, that you had, my child! All the years since, with their burdens of suffering and disappointment, have not dimmed that glorious hour that lives as freshly in my memory as though that nineteenth of February were only yesterday! What chants of praise floated through the cathedral! As we emerged, thousands of peasants who had been unable to obtain

admittance cried to those who came down the steps of the four grand entrances: —

"'You heard it? You heard the priest read the proclamation of our czar?'

"Being affirmatively answered, they touched the snowy earth with their foreheads, blessing God and their father the czar."

"And you heard and saw it all! O grandfather, how thankful you must be!"

"So glad was I, so exultant for the twenty-two million liberated Russians, that I cast gold right and left. The people blessed me. I have always desired the blessing of the poor, consecrated by Christ's identification with them. Arminioff and I strode on to the Winter Palace, whither the multitude were flocking to behold the czar. Oh, the cry that rent the air when Alexander II appeared upon the balcony! It rose from a million hearts. The crowd surged to and fro in their gladness, gratitude, and reverent triumph. They waved their hats and spread out their hands in benediction toward the beloved czar. I wept like a child; and so did the vast crowd. Their loyal cheers were broken by sobs of thanksgiving."

Spent with emotion, Mr. Harcourt again sank back in his chair, motioning to Hester for silence. Long she sat by him, living over the thrilling scene, and more closely drawn to her grandfather than ever before.

"Hester!"

"Yes, dear grandfather."

"Repeat something — something suited to one so

soon to pass to the eternal realities, 'through the grave and gate of death,' where I too at last shall be free!"

Hester repeated: —

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea:

But such a tide as, moving, seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening-bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

"Amen!" murmured the old man, closing his eyes, while a faint smile illumined his pale features.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A DILEMMA.

A BOAT was passing Ullescliffe, rowed by Jack Bolton and Arthur Carroll, in which sat Helen Armitage, Olga, and Rustoff.

"Poor Miss Hester! How weary she must be!" said Olga, glancing at the open windows of Mr. Harcourt's beautiful cottage.

"Tired, indeed!" exclaimed Jack, "shut up with that strange old man and stranger brother."

"Will he die?" asked Olga in a whisper.

"Not he! He is recovering fast. Count Alexis and Monsieur de Rosambert returned to Bayview with a very encouraging report. Of course it is only on Hester's account that any one cares for Basil's condition."

"How can you say that, neighbor?" retorted Olga.

"Because I know, you intrepid little Russian!"

Jack and Arthur pulled on steadily for another hour.

"Is n't that a pretty cove, Nelly?"

"Where, Jack?"

"Away to your right. The beach sparkles with shells, and holds in its curve a mermaiden's blue mirror."

"Where? Oh, where?" cried Olga.

"Sit down!" shouted Jack. "Do you wish to upset the boat?"

"Take us to that cove. Do, neighbor!"

"As it is low tide and that cove is my especial property, it is there I am now going."

"How is it your property?"

"By right of discovery."

"Is there a cave?"

"A big one."

"O Jack, is it where we read" —

"The same, Nelly. I have christened it 'Helen's Bower.'"

"Oh, thank you!"

Long, ribbed, rocky ledges extended far out into the sea. They were quite hidden at high tide, but at that hour they were bare, and the boat was run up between them on the fine, white beach. In front, several yards from and above the shore, yawned the spacious, dry cavern, always a safe retreat and pleasant shelter from wind and sun and rain.

Olga, who had often seen the elder members of the party carry books on their expeditions, had to-day brought one with her — a simply-written biography of the great Albrecht Dürer — over which she had been poring until the moment of starting.

On a jutting ledge, with Rustoff at her side, she tried to continue her reading, but was distracted by the beauty of the scene — the crystal-clear cove, the tinted seaweeds, pretty shells, lilac and green mosses in the little pools where the shellfish were living happily and undisturbed. Over the radiant solitude of the sea swept the ships, with sails spread, seeking other shores.

"O Rustoff! are n't you glad you are here with me?" she asked her Pomeranian, who, with snowy paws on her knee, was intently studying the dear and animated face of his beloved little mistress. He sought to tell her by the waving of his silvery plume that he enjoyed any spot on land or sea in her company.

"I must put away my book, Rustoff. This cove is too enchanting! But first I'll tell you — for I wish you to know all I know — that Albrecht Dürer was a wonderful German painter who lived four hundred years ago. He had a little daughter Agnes, whom he loved as papa loves me. In his painting room, with Agnes by his side, he could forget his home thorn; that was his wife. Oh, such a thorn! She reminds me of Mademoiselle Prascovia, who taught me last year and at whom you never forgot to growl and bark! In winter, when the birds flew to Albrecht Dürer's windows for crumbs, Agnes, seeing how cold they were, sewed them little woolen coats, but they were never finished, for the silk thread had no knot! Dürer could paint, but he could not teach his dear little Agnes how to make a knot!"

Laughing, and jumping up from her ledge, Olga ran to her companions over the rocks and seaweed, Nelly, Jack, and Arthur were sketching.

Olga watched their progress or glanced off at the Atlantic. "Why cannot we stay all night?" she suddenly inquired. "I wish to see the sun set, the moon rise, and, to-morrow, the sun come out of the sea."

"How I wish we could!" answered Jack. "It is

so warm and the cavern is so dry at this season; besides, the sea never reaches it — it is up too high."

"Then can't we, neighbor?"

"Certainly not, you reckless Russian! Imagine, for one moment, the terror at Bayview. No one knows where we are."

Olga made no response. Presently she wandered back where the boat was beached.

"Rustoff, I wish to whisper something in your ear."

The dog responded by an intelligent glance and a wag of his tail.

"Now watch me! How I wish you could help!"

Stepping up to the boat, his mistress took out an oar, then another and another — till the four had been adroitly carried and sent adrift on the sea. Away they floated, up and down on the tide, farther and farther. She and Rustoff watched the long thin blades recede beyond all chance of present recovery. She ran back to the sketchers.

"Have you a large luncheon? Where is the basket? I am so hungry!"

"I put it in the shadow of that cliff," answered Jack, springing up to bring it.

The refreshments were abundant and delicious.

"We still have more than enough for dinner and breakfast," said Olga, surveying what remained.

"Dinner and breakfast! We 'll be far enough from here by that time," said Jack. "When we cross over, I 'll give what remains to little Jemmie Felton who will be on the wharf."

"You 'll be too hungry to think of little Jemmie Felton," returned Olga, laughing.

"I never eat between luncheon and dinner, Olga. Pray sit down: I wish to sketch you and Rustoff."

Olga complied, and Nelly laid aside her pencil to read aloud to her companions.

As the afternoon waned, Arthur Carroll went to prepare the boat for their return.

"Halloo, Bolton! What has become of the oars?"

"They are where we left them."

"They 're gone."

Up jumped Jack to join Arthur Carroll. "They could not have shipped themselves — they were left too securely."

Helen followed the lads. Olga and Rustoff remained on the ledge, the heart of the former beating faster than usual.

Back rushed Jack.

"Olga, have you hidden the oars?"

"No."

"Don't you know where they are?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Floating back to Bar Harbor or out to sea."

"You did not dare" —

Jack was speechless with anger.

"Yes; I dared! I told you I wished to see the sun set, the moon rise, and the sun come up out of the sea."

"And I as distinctly told you we could not stay!" thundered Jack.

"But I whispered to Rustoff that we could."

Jack Bolton was so furious that he did not trust himself to speak. Carroll and Helen had returned.

"Olga!" said Helen, reproachfully.

Carroll laughed. "If the worst comes to the worst, we can stay in that big cave," said he.

"We 'll throw the two Russians in, you mean," growled Jack.

"Don't tease, Jack," expostulated Nelly. "Since the oars have floated away, let 's make the best of our misfortune. We have a luncheon basket more than half full. The night will be dry and warm, and some one will assuredly come to look us up."

"No one will know where to look," returned Jack in derision. "What a mean thing to ship those oars simply to have her own will! Just imagine, Helen, the panic over at Bar Harbor before they start to look for us! That would be more sensible than trying to palliate the latest freak of that young Cossack."

Jack turned his back on both girls and strode to the boat.

Olga, much excited, but never for a moment regretting she had shipped the oars into the sea, watched her companions, as speechless as Rustoff. Her father's anxiety seemed never to have crossed her mind till Jack's last remark and disappearance. She sprang to her feet, grieved and penitent.

"But, Nelly, he must know we are safe somewhere! Do tell me he will know! Could his hair turn white from fear?"

"His hair turn white?" quoth Jack savagely, returning from the boat; "yes; and his heart stop beating. Indeed he might fall down and die, thinking his only child was fathoms deep in the sea! I have heard of such cases; they are very common."

"Oh, you wicked, wicked neighbor!" cried Olga with flashing eyes and mantling color. "How dare you — dare you!"

She burst into passionate tears and hid her face on Rustoff's neck.

"We 'll have enough of your mad freak before we are through," Jack continued in the same savage tone. "You 'll see 'the sun set, the moon rise, and the sun come up out of the sea,' you may be certain; but it won't give you much joy, I'll be bound! All I care for is the anxiety at Bar Harbor. So far as I am concerned, I would like to spend a week over here, if they only knew where we are."

Nelly, appalled by the situation, sat mute with her arm around Olga. A sea gull flew by. Oh, if she could bid it bear a message to Bar Harbor! The sun was sloping toward the great blue Atlantic, sending long, slanting lines of golden fire across the waves. The dark cliffs were irradiated by the sunset's splendor, and lofty, white cloud-mountains tinted rose and lilac gleamed in the west. How the white sails were drifting back to Bar Harbor, unmindful of the wistful gaze of Nelly and Olga!

"If papa were only on this side," whispered his mistress to Rustoff, "how happy I'd be! But with

that tossing, sparkling blue sea between us, I 'm very, very unhappy."

"And well you may be," said Jack, who surmised the import of Olga's murmur. "I presume, at this blessed minute, our people are watching on the wharf, each one contributing something more terrifying than the last suggestion offered by the other! 'The Little Master' must have proposed and then helped you launch those big oars into the sea!"

"Who is the Little Master?"

"Have n't you read Sintram?"

"No."

"Your favorite Albrecht Dürer's The Knight Death and Satan suggested the story of Sintram to Baron de la Motte Fouqué. It surpasses most sermons in its power to arouse conscience and" — Jack left his sentence unfinished. Leaning against the cliff, his face became clouded, his gaze indrawn.

"The dead-lights are up!" thought Nelly, longing to know the thoughts that oppressed him and shut him away from her companionship. For weeks he had been so genial, so unlike the Jack she first knew at Mount Desert, that she had almost forgotten those early days of gloom.

"What is Dürer's picture, Nelly?" asked Olga.

"A mountain gorge lighted by the setting sun. Towering above the lonely ravine is seen the castle of Drontheim — the home of the noble Knight Sintram, who, fully armed, is riding through the gorge. Beneath his horse cowers his faithful hound terrified by his master's two weird companions — one, a ghastly

figure, pallid and emaciated, from the neck of whose small gaunt steed hangs a bell emitting a ghostly chime. Walking erect and pursuing them is a hideous creature with the eyes of a fiend in the form of a wild boar. His gestures menace Sintram and his companion Death."

"What does the picture mean?" asked Olga, half fascinated, half terrified.

"We are not sure what was in the mind of Albrecht Dürer; but Baron Fouqué saw in it a thrilling story of our strife through life with the Evil One who tempts us to our undoing. Death that closes the struggle and the divine grace that imparts to us strength to resist Satan are pictured in the prayers of the loyal Rolf, ever remembering and interceding for Sintram in the castle seen above the gloomy gorge."

"Does the knight die there?"

"No; his obedience and faith conquer the temptations of the Little Master, who leaves him alone with Death. The latter, assuming a winning form, murmurs, 'I shall not come to thee for many years; but thou must not forget me meanwhile.' Then he too disappears, leaving Sintram at the outlet of the gorge as dawn reddens in the sky."

"A boat! a boat!" cried Arthur Carroll. "It's going by and is too far out to see us."

"Let us shout!" cried Jack.

But the prolonged cry did not reach the ears of those in the boat; or not sufficiently to arrest them.

The sun had set long ago. The full moon had risen and the Atlantic shimmered in the beauteous

light that also bathed the mountains. Out on the sea the stately ships moved slowly, their sails white in the moonlight or dim in the shadow.

"You 'll have your wish, Olga," said Jack. "You 'll see the dawn as surely as you have seen the sun set and the moon rise."

Olga, with her arm round Rustoff, bent toward Nelly: —

"Was it the Little Master who made me ship those oars into the sea?"

"It was not the spirit of love, dear little Olga."

"I never thought of my neighbor: I mean, I did not let the oars float away to vex him."

"In thinking only of one's self there is always danger of harming or grieving others," gently answered Nelly.

The Sea Gull had just glided from Bar Harbor. Count Alexis, Henri de Rosambert, and Dick Tenby gazed anxiously over the radiant bay. As the hours passed Count Alexis became more and more distressed.

"It is almost midnight," said he.

A prolonged shout — another — and another rent the air!

"They 're found!" cried Dick Tenby. "I know where they are now!"

One can imagine the greetings and the return to Bar Harbor with Jack's boat brought back in the wake of the yacht. The count, with his little daughter folded in his arms, was too thankful then to utter one

word of condemnation or give a glance of displeasure.

Olga and Rustoff, sound asleep, reached the wharf where Mrs. Bolton, Meta, Miss Conway, Madame de Chavigni, and Gudule were gathered in anxious expectation.

"'All's well that ends well,'" said Count Alexis as he stepped into the carriage with Olga; "but my little daughter goes no more to sea unless I am her companion! Say good-night, Olga, and ask every one to forgive your thoughtless freak that made us all so unhappy."

"Good-night — and — forgive" — murmured the sleepy child, her head falling again on her father's shoulder.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"SUNSET AND EVENING STAR."

TWO days of fog suddenly eclipsed Mount Desert, blotting out the mountains, sea, and islands. Bar Harbor, encircled with an inpenetrable curtain, hastened to light all its wood fires, the gleaming flames and crackling logs imparting a cheer much needed.

"How that child enjoys the warmth!" exclaimed Miss Patty, looking at Zelma crouched before the blaze, watching and smiling at the flames' fantastic shapes and pretty hues.

Madame de Chavigni patted the head resting against her knee.

"What shall you christen her?" suddenly asked Miss Patty.

"I have not decided," absently responded the Creole lady, forgetting the question as her thoughts again wandered far, far away to that summer on Last Island when she held in her arms her darling child, delighting in its lovely smiles and merry laughter.

Miss Patty noticed her inattention.

"Pray pardon me, my dear Constance; but you know Zelma is a little savage and should be christened immediately."

Madame de Chavigni roused from her painfully sweet reverie and confronted the assertion.

"She will always look like an Indian," moaned Miss Patty.

"Zelma daily shows less of race peculiarity. In color she is Spanish and her lineaments are of the purest. Perhaps Jack Bolton's surmise is correct — a child stolen and hidden."

"Indian or Spanish, she ought to be baptized."

"In Bar Harbor?"

"Yes; and the sooner the better. Your friends are around you and would be warmly in sympathy."

"They shall be gratified."

"Shall I gather them while the fog lasts?" asked Miss Patty, much relieved and delighted.

"I prefer sunshine in which to give Zelma her name."

"Do you wish her to retain the name she now bears?"

"Yes; unless I give her mine."

"Yours!" cried Miss Patty, aghast.

"I love the child," answered Madame de Chavigni.

"Your grandmother's name!"

"My dear grandmother would not object. Dear Miss Patty, my life has been so wrecked by trouble and disaster that I fail to attach importance to what might once have impressed me. Why was I born to bear such grief and horror? Oh, I am very, very weary! Zelma brightens the gloom, lifts a little of my burden. Let me have my way with her."

"Ah, forgive me, my dear!" cried penitent Miss Patty. "I was not condemning."

"I can always trust you," answered Constance.

A burst of unexpected sunlight illumined the apartment.

"The fog has broken! Look at the lovely spaces of blue sky from this window, Zelma. The breeze will presently sweep the rest of the white curtain quite away. Shall we not take a drive? I am longing to see Hester."

"So am I," responded Miss Patty.

Sails and oars enlivened the water. The bluest of skies smiled over Bar Harbor, nature rapturously revealing herself after her dismal veiling.

Basil Wilmerding, still pale, but rapidly recovering, was sitting on the Ullescliffe veranda, Hester reading to him. Mr. Harcourt, just awakened from his second nap, greeted his granddaughter's friends cordially. The long windows of his library opening on the veranda gave him an opportunity of studying the faces of both ladies and of deciding to whom he should prefer his request. He could not leave Hester without a safer guardian and friend than Basil. Under the care of Madame de Chavigni she would be free from his arbitrary, reckless moods and requirements.

A few low words with the Creole lady brought him much relief from anxiety.

"You do not think my request unwarranted?"

"Ah, you are very kind. In a brief period Hester will be — The future must reveal what I have decided for my granddaughter. In your home, Basil would feel a restraint he would not know in Miss Conway's. I have said enough. You understand me?"

"Perfectly, and will be loyal to the trust."

"Thank you." Mr. Harcourt extended his hand; but a sudden pallor passed over his face and his breath came in painful gasps. Hester hastened to give the well-known remedies.

"They have asked you to drive, Hester; go, my child. You are too confined with Basil and me."

"But, grandfather"—

"Pray do as I say. I desire entire quiet."

As the carriage drove away for a drive which Hester intended should be very brief, Basil entered his grandfather's room.

"When I am gone what are your plans?"

"I have none."

Mr. Harcourt started in his chair and it was wonderful how strong the feeble voice suddenly became from excitement and anxiety.

"You have none! When will you have? A man with no aim in life—vacillating, weak, unreliable! Poor Hester!"

"It is only lately, sir, that you have cared for my sister's present or future," retorted Basil, furious and resentful.

"It is enough that I have awakened to my duty. I have confided her to Madame de Chavigni. Remember you are never to molest her. If she cares to leave the companionship I approve, it will be for but one sacred reason—her marriage. All has been made safe for my Lucy's daughter before it was too late to shield her from the brother who so causelessly wrecked all his sister possessed."

Basil would endure no more. He strode from the room, sending Clinton to sit with his grandfather. For the hundredth time he questioned whether the oak box had been opened, and his grandfather, knowing all, added that knowledge to what he already knew of his reckless past. Also, was he really — without a possibility of amendment — was he that despicable character he had just heard sketched in those few incisive words? Then, the sooner all was ended for him the better. The fact that he had regretted his deed of a few weeks before seemed to have made Basil a nobler character in his own estimation. "Is it fate — my fate — to be what I have been painted? But 'God is above every fate.'"

The uplifting memory of Gudule de Rosambert's words came to send one beam amid his gloom. A longing to see her, to hear her speak, possessed him. Basil, rarely disgarding an impulse, at once proceeded toward Miss Conway's hotel, to find Monsieur de Rosambert and his sister entering a carriage.

"Just in time to accompany us!" was the cordial greeting of the former. "Sit by Gudule on that easy seat. The delicious air will invigorate you. I am truly rejoiced to see you so much improved."

Basil, still weak, could not listen unmoved to the kind, friendly interest expressed in the words and glance of the French gentleman, especially as they were echoed in the face and voice of his sister. Cheered and calmed, he leaned back wondering whether Mademoiselle de Rosambert or his grandfather possessed the more accurate knowledge of the

real Basil. One had faith; the other only bitter distrust of all that concerned him.

Turning southward from Bar Harbor, they entered the woods leading to Schooner Head, for the sake of the grand ocean views of which Henri de Rosambert and Gudule never wearied. The road wound on above Great Head and Thunder Cave to the Otter Cliffs, and then home through the Gorge. On one side towered Newport Mountain, its slopes green with fragrant forests of pine and spruce, and on the other rose stern and lofty cliffs. Emerging from this well-guarded path the road suddenly curved toward the shore. The stretch of sunlit sea was magnificent, the salt air bracing and electric, and the genuine kindliness of the brother and sister inspiring. Basil felt himself another creature in their atmosphere They went on till the Otter Creek road was reached; then took their way through the wild and picturesque Gorge, passing the green meadow with its clear, tinkling brook singing a quiet song for those who paused to gaze and listen.

"Thank you, thank you!" said Basil, very happy, but weary, when the carriage deposited him at Ullescliffe. "The Ocean Drive will always be a dear memory linked with two I shall never forget!" he exclaimed involuntarily.

"We are so glad to have had you with us. Can I see Mr. Harcourt? A message was given me from him by Count Viazemski as we were starting for our drive. If he is now able to receive me, my sister will return to our hotel."

Monsieur de Rosambert was immediately admitted, Basil wondering why his grandfather had selected Count Alexis to bear the message. Though the Russian gentleman was at Ullescliffe daily, there must be another reason.

Very earnest was the hand-clasp the old man gave the younger.

"Your note was a surprise, De Rosambert; but a pleasant one. It gratified me that you remembered I was Hester's grandfather — though, alas! from my long neglect I deserved no consideration. Thank God that you are young and may avoid the almost unpardonable mistakes of my life. May you never be tempted to resentment! But you are a better, nobler man than I was then. I shall not live to see Hester's future. If she consents to find her home in France, or — tell her my fondest blessing will accompany, crown her decision. Ah, I am very, very feeble. May God bless you and Alexis Viazemski. Whichever" — but the sentence was not concluded. Mr. Harcourt faintly motioned with his hand that he must be alone.

As Henri de Rosambert withdrew, Hester entered to take her accustomed seat by her grandfather. He had become very dear to her; so dear that she was uneasy every moment that she spent away from him.

For an hour Mr. Harcourt remained silent, seeking to regather the failing forces that every emotion decreased so painfully. Toward sunset he rallied wonderfully, to Hester's intense relief and joy.

"Always able to go and come as I chose, it is

difficult to learn patience in this enforced feebleness and idleness. Hester, hand me that water-color on the easel."

She brought the picture.

"You know this?"

"No, grandfather."

"These ruins are all that now remain of old Tintagel Castle on the Cornish coast."

"King Arthur's Tintagel!" exclaimed Hester, full of interest.

"Yes. I have stood there, and your dear mother with me. I love the memory of that visit, so tenderly is it linked with her and her delight."

"And will you" — began Hester eagerly.

"Tell you? That is what I wish, dear child. From London we went to the little inn at Trevenna. Rested and refreshed, we walked through the quiet village and down the valley slanting steeply between green hills to the sea. How enchanted your mother was with the ocean's blue and the more delicate azure of the sky as they blended on the horizon! To my surprise, a precipice stood between us and the shore — a vast peninsula of rock invading the sea, on which rose the ruins of the donjon-keep of old Tintagel. Behind it, on the mainland, stood the ruins of King Arthur's castle, linked to the keep by a narrow strip of rock. Then I remembered that what seemed a peninsula had once been an island, a drawbridge connecting the two portions of the castle. The bridge was no more, and the fragments of the castle shot up sheer from the edge of the precipice,

showing that not only rocks and soil had fallen from each side, but masses of the royal residence had also plunged into the abyss.

"Before ascending the height we had a merry scramble down to the shore, finding an immense cavern, or natural tunnel, beneath the ruined keep, where, through its arched entrances the Atlantic swept in and out at high tide, depositing the tinted seaweed we saw on the pebbly floor. In the green-hued twilight we tested the echoes lurking in this rocky chamber, while across its jagged, aged roof wandered a lovely ripple of light reflected from the fitful play of the sun upon the waters. With eagerness we crossed the intervening space to ascend to the ancient donjon-keep. Such a zigzag path cut in slopes of slate up the steep face of the mighty rock! It brought us at last to a gothic door in a crumbling, battlemented wall, where we entered to walk over dark green sea grass amid ruins stately, dusky, hoary with age. From that point the sheer descent to the beach was not seen. Through the stone archway we beheld only the sky and sea in all their splendor of space and light and color, with here and there a white sail gliding on and shining in the sun.

"How vividly I still behold my Lucy's radiant face as, speechless with exquisite delight, she leaned upon my arm! We remained silent, gazing and reverently adoring the Creator of all beauty while feasting our eyes on what his love had wrought out for us from nothingness, to enjoy and bless him for!

"'Oh, if some one would sing the *Gloria in Excelsis*

or the *Te Deum*, papa! I cannot use common words to express my exceeding happiness to-day,' exclaimed my Lucy.

"I bade her sing, and there we chanted both noble hymns of praise to relieve and express the joy and gratitude of our overflowing hearts."

For many seconds Mr. Harcourt was silent, living again in the pure bliss of that vanished hour. Hester, in full sympathy with the scene, her heart almost broken with longing for the loving and lovely mother for whom she would always yearn, sat as mute as he.

With a sigh, the old man roused himself. "Outside the walls we saw the foundation of the king's little chapel — its altar and chancel ruins; and the graveyard, with its defaced slate headstones. At last, a little weary from our long ramble, we sat down to rest and await the sunset in Arthur's Chair — a canopied hollow wrought in the rock by wind and rain and air.

"The ruins of thirteen hundred years ago were before and around us, standing in silence and loneliness on the old Cornish coast. In the silence we heard waves breaking on the beach and the cry of the gull, and then we saw the sunset — sea and sky a glorious blaze of molten gold and crimson fire, too majestic in beauty, too lovely in melting hues and changing outlines for words to utter or brush to paint.

"In its fading splendor we descended the steep and dangerous path to the valley, often looking back with joy and gratitude and awe at the still thrilling vision that was vouchsafed us.

"In memory of that day I give you this picture of

Tintagel, Hester — a shadow of those lonely, crumbling walls and battlements on that bold and lofty headland facing sea and sky.

"O my child, I thank God for you, his latest gift to me — so unworthy of the blessing! May He have you in his tender keeping!" he faintly murmured, sinking into one of his attacks of unconsciousness, bearing so startling a similitude to death that Hester, while quickly seeking the usual remedies, trembled in agonizing apprehension.

Doctor Duncan and Basil entered. Bending over his old friend, the doctor started.

"He has gone!" he said.

"Gone? O dear, dear grandfather!" and Hester, weeping, sank on her knees by his side.

In the glory of a sunset radiant as that which had shone around and above Tintagel, the "one clear call" had come for him and he had gone.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON THE HEIGHTS.

"JUST as it ought to have been!" said all Bar Harbor on hearing that Mr. Harcourt had died without leaving a will.

The vow he had made on the marriage of his daughter had been no secret. To make a will was to disinherit his grandchildren, while to pass away without one was to permit the law to secure the large estate for their benefit.

"Fortunately," Bar Harbor said, "Mr. Harcourt learned at last to know and love his kin and thus permitted himself the delight of abundantly enriching them."

To Hester, sincerely attached to her grandfather, the property now hers was so inwrought with many precious memories of one near and dear that its consideration gave her only pain.

Basil had no patience with her pale, sad face and mourning robe. His exultation was boundless. Every regret, every doubt had vanished. Hester owed their prosperity all to him; and he longed to reveal the masterly act that had so splendidly enriched them. But what was the import of that mysterious paper still in the possession of his grandfather's lawyers? It puzzled, but did not disturb, his supreme self-complacency.

"Mr. Harcourt must have destroyed the will we witnessed soon after we left Bar Harbor," said the Messrs. Boultby and Cassiton. "We are glad natural affection asserted its power and induced him to remove the only obstacle to the inheritance of your sister and yourself."

"You are certain that will was against us?"

"Absolutely. But it was drawn before Miss Wilmerding and yourself had become well known to Mr. Harcourt."

"He sent you a letter some weeks ago."

"Yes; with strict injunctions that it was to be unopened until six months after his death."

"Do you know its contents?"

"Not one syllable; nor can I imagine its purport. We congratulate you and Miss Wilmerding on your large fortune and will endeavor to serve you as faithfully as we have for years served your late grandfather."

The lawyers departed and Basil and Hester were launched on the top wave of prosperity.

But Hester shrank from the publicity of being known as the possessor of great wealth. She accepted it as a talent, feeling its responsibility and longing to cheer sad hearts and anxious minds by sharing her unexpected blessing with such burdened ones. The remembrance of her own recent trying perplexities was vivid, and her sympathy eager and warm for others similarly circumstanced. She was very lonely too without her grandfather. In losing him she seemed bereft anew of the mother they had so loved and who had so devotedly clung to them. Many a

half hour she spent studying the water-color of old Tintagel, recalling her grandfather's description of the scene and of her sweet mother — a young girl then, no older than herself.

"It was grandfather's last gift to me," she said, showing the beautiful picture to Arthur Carroll, who, full of sympathy for her sorrow, often came to bring her flowers and to take her out to drive or row.

"I have an unfortunate name," said the lad, remembering King Arthur and his knights.

"The most beautiful in the world, you mean — with such an ideal to work up to —

> Who reverenced his conscience as his king;
> Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
> Who spoke no slander, no, nor listened to it;
> Who honored his own word as if his God's;
> Who led a sweet life in purest chastity,
> And loved the truth and all that makes a man.

"But who could realize that?"

"You could! Oh, how I wish you would permit the name you bear to be an inspiration!"

Arthur, with a lad's sensitiveness, responded unreservedly to the beaming eyes and enthusiastic voice of his companion.

"Truth, self-sacrifice, fidelity, purity — the characteristics most approved by God and noble minds everywhere. Never say or think that they are beyond you. But believe, accept, live, and die for them. All that King Arthur was, or was imagined to be, is embodied for us in the religion of Christ, whose spiritual principle Arthur and his peerless knights

represented as they warred with the world, the flesh, and the devil."

Arthur gazed on Tintagel's bold and lofty headland, its deserted, wind-swept slopes, its lonely, crumbling ruins rising against a glorious background of widely stretching sea and azure sky, and recalled its memories of thirteen hundred years ago, still fresh and powerful for good because the Arthur of those days stood for self-sacrifice, fidelity, purity, and truth.

The picture of Tintagel with its associations, Hester's words, his own memories and thoughts quickened by the Spirit of all truth, sent Arthur forth from the young girl's presence with a new aim in life, pure and invincible.

"There is no prospect now of your ever coming to live with me," sighed Miss Conway, who had entered to claim Hester for a walk along the shore. "My beautiful castle in the air has vanished and all my bright anticipations with it. But you will visit me?"

"With so much pleasure, dear Miss Patty!"

"I am told your brother has already bought a handsome residence in New York. Your grandfather's house was too gloomy, he said. Hester, do be careful! Are you sure Basil cannot wreck all you possess a second time?"

"My half is perfectly secured, dear Miss Patty. But do not judge Basil by the past. He has had a bitter and severe experience. He tells me all his wild days are over. Do you not think him changed?"

"He seems unnaturally excited," frankly responded the old lady.

"Where one has not loved the relative through whom wealth comes, the sudden relief from almost poverty to affluence would cause the strongest to manifest an unusual exhilaration."

"I really believe you loved that vindictive, stern old man, Hester!"

"I did love — I do love him, Miss Patty. He was very tender to me, seeing in me both my dear mother and his granddaughter." Hester's eyes filled with tears.

"You are now to live with Madame de Chavigni, according to your grandfather's desire?"

"Yes. For my sake she has kindly consented to remain in New York this winter. I am so anxious — I fear Basil's undesirable acquaintances may haunt his steps and mar his good resolutions. My presence in the city would be a hindrance to any extraordinary extravagance."

Miss Patty shook her head. "There is his strongest defense, Hester!"

A canoe was passing in which sat Gudule de Rosambert, Basil dexterously using the paddle. Both faces were animated and they recognized the two friends with a smile.

Was she thus to lose her brother? was Hester's startled inquiry. Better so than to keep and not save him from evil influences. Remembering what Basil had said of Mademoiselle de Rosambert, she now wondered at her blindness. Yet how strange

and sad the days — the home — would be without her brother's familiar face and voice! He alone was linked with all her earliest, fondest memories. Even anxiety for him had become a second nature.

She turned toward the sea, that Miss Patty might not know the sense of desolation that came over her and that would reveal itself in fast-dropping tears. But Miss Patty had once been young and had experienced similar suffering.

"I know every step of your path, Hester," her voice trembling with sympathetic emotion.

But Hester could not discuss the unexpected change in her life.

"I cannot talk of it just now, dear Miss Patty. You will forgive me?"

"Pardon me, my dear, for grieving you. But when you do care to speak, remember that I understand all in the present and future that so distresses you."

"I must not — will not — be selfish!" exclaimed Hester. "Caring for Gudule, I shall care thrice for her when she is Basil's wife. But" — Did Gudule know Basil? Could she trust him for a happy life?

Jack Bolton came rowing up the bay, whistling a merry tune. "Where is Olga?" he called out.

"Driving with her father and Nelly."

"I have a plan," shouted Jack.

Hester smiled and nodded.

"Where is De Rosambert?"

She shook her head. On went Jack, rowing with renewed energy. All the friends had separated that morning after the christening of Zelma. It was

Jack's determination to win their consent to his plan for spending a night on Green Mountain; nor did he find acquiescence difficult.

"Bar Harbor is so crowded. Where do all the people come from? It is a grand thought, and will be better in the execution, to see the sun rise out of the sea to-morrow morning; at least, those will see it who are enterprising enough to renounce their slumbers in season. I shall give orders to have us wakened at three o'clock — or earlier."

"Earlier? Then we had better sit up all night!" cried Hester, laughing.

So, just before sunset, Jack's friends gathered from various points, and a buckboard with seats for twelve bore them out of Bar Harbor — Olga, with Rustoff happily accommodated between her father and herself; Madame de Chavigni, with Zelma on her knee, and Judith by the driver bearing the traveling bag with every requisite for the comfort of the night; Mrs. Bolton, Helen, and Meta; Miss Conway and Hester; Henri de Rosambert and the two lads; and Gudule and Basil.

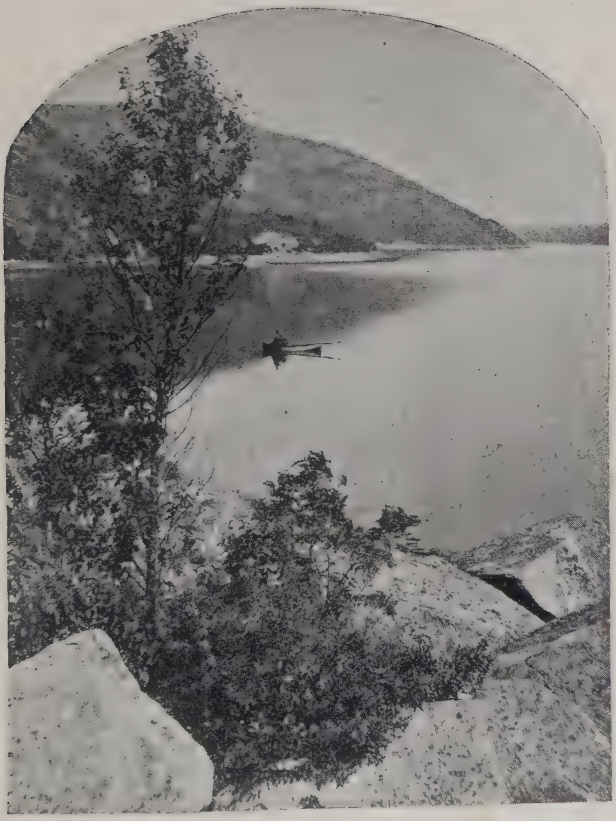
As before, the four horses turned to the left, following the Eagle Lake road a mile out of the village, and bearing the friends through the beautiful forest of spruce, birch, and pine trees. Ruddy gleams and golden lights of sunset illumined the sylvan scene, while far below the height they had gained occasional glimpses of Eagle Lake enhanced the picture. Emerging from the woods the road ran out across the open ledge overlooking the silvery lake and the green slopes

and rocky peak of Sargent's Mountain. The northern portion of Mount Desert lay glowing in the sunset, its picturesque hills and sparkling lakes embowered in foliage. Frenchman's Bay gleamed on their right, and beyond it, on the mainland, amid a chain of lesser mountain peaks towered grand old Katahdin, one hundred and twenty miles away.

When the setting sun cast its beams lower and lower, the dazzling pathway lying across sea and bay shone like molten silver that burned to gold; Somes' Sound, Bar Harbor, the chain of Porcupine Islands, Lamoine on its graceful peninsula, Sullivan at the head of its picturesque bay, smiling Sorrento and Winter Harbor with verdant slopes and bold headlands — all were more than ever beautiful in the gracious light and ambient air.

On nearly the highest point of Green Mountain stands the Summit House. Jack, Olga, and Rustoff started at once to examine the base of that large and substantial structure bolted so fast to the ledge. In spite of the presence of many other tourists the accommodation for Jack's party was ample. Assured of this fact, there was nothing to disquiet the mind, and all prepared to enjoy to the utmost the beauty and marvel of the scene around, above, and below them.

The sun sank; the west softly faded from deepest red to palest rose, and from richest gold to softest amber. Twilight came with its stars and moon; and night beheld the sea transformed to silver. Bright beams faithfully streamed from eight lighthouse towers along the coast, and the beacon on Mount



SOMES' SOUND.

Desert Rock — the most remote of all — twinkled a splendid star in the deep blue of midheaven.

Hester turned to speak again to Madame de Chavigni but found instead the tall, soldierly figure of Count Alexis at her side. With arms folded across his breast, his blonde head bared, and his refined, striking features and blue eyes of the north, he was one of the noblest representatives of the aristocratic Russian.

Always free to mention her grandfather to one who had so evidently loved him, she greeted Count Viazemski with pleasure, eager to speak and hear him speak of one so dear.

"Ah, how I miss him!"

"And I, also. He made a deep impression on me twenty years ago, when, a little lad of twelve, I saw him first in Moscow. He was so earnest, so enthusiastic, and so simple and honest in his expression of enjoyment. It was a very great pleasure to renew my acquaintance at Bar Harbor, and thus to know I had not idealized him. I shall never hear the musical bells in our Tower of Ivan the Great without recalling his first conversation with me on my return to Mount Desert from Washington."

"Would he permit me to share the memory?" asked Hester wistfully.

"I am sure he would!" and Count Alexis narrated the conversation.

Hester was much touched; her heart beating tenderly, regretfully for the vanished one to whom she could no longer minister.

"His was a grand nature, warped for a space by

mental disquiet and sorrow. He told me the history of his life one evening."

"Oh!" and Hester was mute. Had her grandfather also revealed his distrust of, and dislike for, Basil?

"He loved you, Miss Wilmerding, very tenderly."

"If we had only known each other long, long ago!" cried Hester. "Think of the years of happiness I have lost."

"And your grandfather, also. He deeply realized this."

"Yes; he would have been happier."

"You are like him in your candor and simplicity," involuntarily responded Count Alexis.

"Am I?" Hester smiled, well pleased to resemble her mother's father in any manner.

"I think I also possess the rare pleasure of having known your mother."

"My mother? When — where?"

"The picture your grandfather so eloquently painted has placed her in a golden shrine in my memory, where, Russian-fashion, I have lighted and burn my taper before that lovely nature, and am the better and happier."

Hester turned swiftly toward him, her face radiant; then, with tear-dimmed eyes, moved a step from her grandfather's friend to conceal her emotion.

Through the broad, open windows of the Summit House a wood fire was seen crackling merrily on the hearth. Outside was the summer night with its great moon, stars, and tranquil stillness. The voices

of the many tourists were low as they walked slowly to and fro or sat on the veranda or on the rocks enjoying the beauty of the night.

Olga, with Rustoff bounding by her side, came running to her father.

"My little moonflower, do you enjoy it up here so far from the shore and the sea?" tenderly asked Count Alexis, stooping to enfold Olga, who nestled against him.

"I like it anywhere with you, dearest papa; but specially here. Don't you?"

"Specially here," he responded, the happy, mellow cadence in his voice seeming to include Hester.

"O papa, tell Miss Hester why Prince Khilkroff left the Russian army."

"It is Olga's favorite story at present. I have repeated it often, because I wished her to rejoice in and emulate the noble spirit that prompted the unusual deed. But for you, Miss Wilmerding" —

"Call her Miss Hester, papa! Is not Hester a pretty name? Yes; you said it was very pretty, for I asked you."

There was a second's silence.

"Miss Wilmerding will pardon this small moonflower upon the heights, bewitched by the silvery beams and remoteness from Bar Harbor conventionalities?" pleaded Count Alexis.

Hester smiled.

"Now, papa, pray tell the story!"

"You really care to hear, Miss Wilmerding?"

"I really care very much," answered Hester.

Then Count Viazemski eloquently but briefly narrated the deed of Prince Khilkroff with which the world had rung — so daring, so noble, so self-sacrificing was it. But it was new to Hester. Thrilled and delighted, she suddenly heard her name.

"Hester!"

It was Basil who spoke, in a voice so strained and hoarse and with a face so pallid that his sister caught his arm as if to uphold him. He shook his head.

"I am not ill," he said.

"But you are anxious — distressed! Oh, what is it, Basil?" she asked, moving aside with him.

"I was listening to Count Viazemski, when suddenly this" —

"Then you are ill!" cried Hester. "Is it that pain in the heart from which you suffered before I went to grandfather's?"

"Yes. You have found me out! It is pain in the heart; inherited from him, most probably," Basil responded, thankful to mislead his sister, that by any means she might cease questioning.

They all entered the Summit House to gain what sleep they might before the early call to watch the sun rise.

But Basil sat by his open window during the waning hours of the night and those of the early morning. By some awful and mysterious fate or retribution all his agony of mind on the destruction of his grandfather's will had returned. In his exultation over the great wealth suddenly his he had lost all dread of the mental misery he had known. But it had returned

suddenly, unaccountably. He writhed in its pitiless grasp. An inner voice whispered that as the world had rung with Prince Khilkroff's heroism, so would it ring with his perfidy. When? How? What was the utmost the law could wreak on the detection of a destroyed will?

The moon set, the stars faded; there was a space as of twilight — dim and still. Earth was watching, waiting for the resurrection of her joy. There was a quivering of light in the east, ever increasing, expanding, till the heavens were glowing and earth and sea were transfigured by the indescribable glory and beauty of the dawn. From one lovely combination and unfolding of color to another grew the wonderful boon of the daylight, till above vanished mists, over an enraptured earth and sea, and amid the singing of birds, the sun was gloriously enthroned.

CHAPTER XXX.

A SUMMER EVENING.

COMING down from the stillness, sweetness, and majesty of the upper world, the party found Bar Harbor in one of its annual excitements over the arrival of the first of the yacht-club fleets with flags afloat in all their bravery of festal attire.

Basil threw himself into the scene with feverish energy and vivacity, finding several of his gay friends on their yachts in the harbor.

"I shall go on board and spend the week with Geoffrey Hatton; he will not allow me to say No, nor do I wish to. By the way, I shall have my own yacht soon. You know I have joined the Canoe Club. Through August there is a weekly reception over at Bar Island, where they have a fine club house. I shall take you and Gudule over."

"Indeed, Basil, I do not care to go; besides, my mourning"—

"Oh, I forgot! Must you wear those dismal black gowns? Wear white, Hester! I cannot comprehend how you can care for an old man who neglected and forgot you for years."

"But who loved me very tenderly later."

"What proof did he give?" asked Basil savagely.

"Many proofs in word and look, while with him. And are we not the heirs of all he possessed?"

"No thanks to him!" cried her brother.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean nothing," startled by his indiscretion, and veiling his abruptness by a forced laugh and another question.

"Where are Jack and Carroll going? Oh, I see — fishing! Good-by, Hester. I shall be back and forth; but do not expect me till you see me."

Away hurried Basil to the harbor, as Jack and Arthur struck into a narrow woodland path over ferns and bunchberries shaded by birches and balsam firs. The sun was warm and penetrating and the delicious fragrance of the pine was everywhere. Dried arbutus leaves crackled under the lads' feet, for in that wood the pink flowers clustered thickly in the spring.

Jack and Carroll pursued their way, now whistling, now talking, then silent, intently listening for the sweet, fresh gurgle of running water.

"Halloo!" cried Jack, plunging into a tall thicket, and emerging with Arthur close to a glancing, laughing stream rippling round bowlders, expanding into tranquil pools, or gliding away under overarching grasses.

"See there! see there!" Jack whispered excitedly, as several silvery, scarlet-speckled trout darted beneath an overhanging rock and sped up the transparent stream.

Oh, the deliciousness of that sunny day, its sky of azure, the trout responding, and all the young larch and birch wood behind and before them! Red-tipped moss delicately cushioned the rocks and ground;

woodpeckers in their black-and-silver suits unconcernedly tapped the tree trunks; chipmunks ran along the boughs, or perched on the big, mossy stones on the edge of the wood to quietly inspect the intruders.

"Apart from the fishing, I know Olga would be fascinated with this spot," said Jack, throwing himself down on the bank to rest after his trout basket was full.

The pearly, red-spotted fish were deftly packed in fern and then deposited in the ice-cold water of the stream.

"You 'll have a dripping burden to carry," observed Carroll.

"Not I! Every drop shall trickle out before we start for Bar Harbor. Let 's go up the stream, Carroll. Come!"

He bounded to his feet, but was suddenly arrested by the tones of a violin. "By all the fauns of the wood, if that is not Count Viazemski!"

"Where, Jack?"

"On the bank — away up! Don't you see? Then listen! The violin will guide you, Carroll."

Clear and penetrating, but soft and deliciously sweet, the music floated forth, harmonizing with the sylvan scene. All the gentle, innocent creatures of the woodland also paused in their pretty pastimes to wonder and listen — mute as the two lads under its spell. It was Russian music Count Alexis was playing — delicate, airy as the breeze, bewitching as the forest with its glancing, rippling stream, azure sky above, golden shadows and cool, green depths of shade

below. Then he sang, with the most mellow and beautiful of tenors, a pathetic Russian song.

"Oh, Nelly should hear that!" thought Jack.

"Oh, where is Miss Hester?" thought Arthur.

But Nelly and Hester had heard; for suddenly the boys perceived them, accompanied by Meta, Olga, and the De Rosamberts. They had gone for a drive; but on returning, lured by the charm of the forest, entered to wander there and rest a while at Olga's earnest entreaty. Then it was they discovered the reason for her urgent request: she had brought her father's violin, carefully hidden in a wrap till the moment considered propitious for its emancipation, desiring to surprise her friends with his exquisite playing.

"Some music, papa, as we used to have it in summer time out at Kamennoi Ostrov."

Count Alexis complied. Then Henri de Rosambert and Gudule sang, as they had often sung to their poor friends in Paris, who listened as to the singing of angels — for, indeed, angels of tender goodness the brother and sister had been to them.

"And Miss Wilmerding?" asked Count Viazemski. No one had ever heard her sing. "Does she sing?" No one knew; and Basil was not there to betray her. "I believe you sing," said Count Alexis with conviction.

"I have believed it for some time," responded Henri de Rosambert. "Do you not sing?"

"Yes."

Then Hester was entreated, and to end the varied petitions, standing under the shadow of a drooping

birch, she sang in a sweet, sympathetic contralto an old ballad her mother used to sing long, long ago.

So distinct was the utterance, so beautiful the bell-like quality of the rich, low voice, so artless the feeling expressed in the lovely old song, that every heart was touched and for a time no one thanked the singer.

Rustoff's excited bark and leap down the hill as he espied a squirrel nibbling a pine nut, and several beautiful, ruffled grouse under some drooping foliage, created a diversion.

Olga flew after him, and of course the pretty squirrel and the grouse vanished, much to the discomfiture of mistress and dog.

"Why cannot one enjoy quietly? What need to rush upon and destroy a picture for one's self and others?" exclaimed Jack, ready to tie Olga and Rustoff to the nearest tree.

"Good-afternoon!" called he and Arthur, emerging from their hiding place, much to the surprise of the party on the hill.

"You have trout? Bring them, and we will drive you home."

So the two lads, nothing loath, ran for the basket; but to entirely empty out the little silvery brook that would trickle and trickle from the sides and bottom of the big, fern-packed, trout-filled basket was not to be accomplished in a moment.

"If you are in a hurry, don't wait!" shouted Jack.

"No hurry! Take your time!" the answer came ringing back.

But at last all were accommodated, and the horses gayly fled along the road toward Bar Harbor.

The harbor was full of stately yachts, flags flying, a band playing, the sun shining and the bay an undulating, brilliant floor of sparkling sapphire.

"Why are you so silent, Hester?" asked Helen, who had been troubled by her sad face turned toward the white sails.

"I must not be — I mean, there can really be no cause. O Nelly, are you never anxious?" Hester asked with a sudden fall of the voice that trembled notwithstanding her self-control.

"Not for myself; but I am for others. I should not be even for them."

"Why?"

"Is there not One who is taking care of them and us?"

"Often I can see no guardian hand."

"But if we know — are sure it is there?"

"Still, there is a fixed law; what one sows, one reaps — and nothing else — nothing else! Oh, if I only knew" —

Basil's voice, face, and manner had distressed and alarmed her. There was evidently a burden on his mind he would not share. She was afraid — oh, so afraid! What evil was there still to learn in Basil? To fully know the worst — that she could meet and bear, perhaps. It was the suspense that oppressed, overwhelmed her.

Day had glided into evening. The last amber tint and rosy flush of the sunset were lost in the deep blue

of the tranquil night. Between Bar Island and the wharf the lights of the newly arrived yachts were gleaming. Bonfires had been kindled along the shore; ruby stars suddenly fell from a rocket launched into the air; from wharf and ships more stars floated downward. Canoes and boats glided out upon Frenchman's Bay to see the yacht illumination. A band was playing in honor of the occasion. The rigging of the yachts, from stem to stern, was glowing with pendent lights, and bonfires flamed up against the sky. But another light was rising in the east; the moon, slowly floating upward, flooded water and mountain slopes as her silvery pathway beamed broader and brighter.

In a boat rowed by Count Viazemski and Henri de Rosambert sat Hester, Olga, and Rustoff. With erect, furry ears, silvery coat, wide ruff, dark eyes, and sharp, delicate black muzzle, the Pomeranian was watching the scene. By his mistress' side he enjoyed a perfect satisfaction, only marred by the whiz and blaze of rockets and blue lights that he invariably noticed by an indignant "Wouff — wouff!" It doubtless seemed to him bad taste to mar the tranquillity of the night and the music of the band by that inconsequent waste of noisy powder.

The night was clear and warm. Across the silver track of the moon another canoe suddenly slid, its paddle dipping with rhythmic regularity, containing Basil and his friend Mr. Hatton. They passed and gave no sign of recognition.

From Rustoff was heard a low, decided growl of disapproval. In the five or six times he had seen

Hester's brother this token of disapprobation had never been missing.

"We should return. I am sure Olga's bright eyes are heavy with sleep," said Hester, hoping Gudule had not seen Basil try to pass them with the indifferent air of a stranger. She was quite near in another boat, with Meta and Nelly, rowed by Jack and Arthur Carroll.

"No, no!" cried Olga, hearing Hester's suggestion, and trying not to let her head sink against Rustoff's snowy shoulder. "Rustoff and I are so happy! Just let me rest one moment, papa, by your knee."

The band was playing softly. In another second Olga was fast asleep and Count Viazemski and Henri de Rosambert were rowing back to Bar Harbor.

"Pray pardon me for knowing you are ill at ease," gently said Monsieur de Rosambert as he stood a moment on their hotel veranda awaiting the return of his sister.

"You are very kind to care for my troubles, but — Oh, I am nervous and anxious," Hester concluded with her usual candor. "Nelly possesses such a calm faith that all is, must be, well, because God will not permit useless suffering for ourselves or others. But, do you know, I care far more for the evil and pain that touches another than for what comes to me. For Hester I can trust God; for — for my brother, I am timid as a little child."

"Your feeling is natural, inevitable — when one loves another. I know it from my own experience.

If I might only help you in this anxiety, as in all others!"

"Ah, forgive me! I rest so entirely on your kind friendship and am so truly your friend; but I cannot, cannot" —

"I understand — I will not distress you. Let me help you in any way that I can. Is there no key that will aid you in unraveling the mystery that is perplexing you?"

"How good you are to me!" began Hester; but her voice failed.

"No; good to myself! You do not know the intense pleasure it is to help you."

"Thank you! I see my brother is restless and miserable, but cannot divine the cause. I am afraid to question — to imagine, even; he will not bear it. I must not drive him from me! My chief earthly hope is in Gudule."

"She does not know him," answered Henri de Rosambert, his face and voice unconsciously revealing how much anxiety his sister's engagement caused him.

"Basil has been deeply touched by her confidence. Her trust may avert what I dread. Sometimes the faith of another will create a desire to merit it."

"There must be a higher principle to guide the thought and act."

"Ah, I know that! I was only trying to gain some comfort," said Hester sadly. "Now I must find Madame de Chavigni and Miss Conway. Thank you, so very, very much for your kindness and sympathy. Ah, here is Gudule!"

Gudule linked her arm in Hester's and together they walked down the long corridor leading to their apartments.

"My dear little sister — to be," said Gudule affectionately, "you are very downcast. My own features are not radiant, I know; and I was for one moment very foolish. Being with his friend, it was not possible Basil should pause to speak to us. Am I not right?"

"Dear Gudule, I can only hope and pray that you will always be my brother's good angel. He will listen to you when he will to no other."

Gudule's face beamed. "To-morrow is Sunday. Basil will be sure to come; he promised. Good-night, dear Hester. Trust your dear brother; all will be well."

But Hester could not sleep. Pacing to and fro through her moon-lighted room, she sought distraction from anxiety. "Trust your dear brother; all will be well," had been Gudule's parting sentence. How little she knew the real Basil! Ah, if Hester could trust him! If she could rest her heart and mind on the certainty that her brother would seek to do only and always the right, for right's sake! With a sense of intense relief she recalled, "In all things that are, God is present, even in the evil we bring into the world, to foil it and bring good out of it. We are always disbelieving in God, because life does not go as we intend and desire it to go. We forget that he has larger ends for us than we can see, therefore his plans do not fit ours. If God were not only to hear our

prayers — as he does ever and always, but to answer them as we desire, he would not be God our Saviour, but the ministering genius of our destruction."

Recalling this thought, Hester was comforted in resting on God's strength and wisdom. He knew what was burdening Basil, and would overrule it for his good. How idle her restless, anxious care! Her brother could not evade divine love nor divine justice. Both would work to free him from the evil nature that Hester knew, but, alas! could not remedy.

With thanksgivings that her brother was ever within the omniscience of God, who would yet save him from himself, — faithful to discipline and purify through a perhaps needed trial of pain and suffering, — Hester fell asleep, trusting and satisfied to leave Basil's present and future in the divine hands, murmuring,—

Too weak, too wavering for such holy task
Is my frail arm, O Lord; but I would fain
Track to its source the brightness, I would bask
In the clear ray that makes thy pathway plain.

I dare not hope with David's harp to chase
The evil spirit from the troubled breast;
Enough for me if I can find such grace
To listen to the strain and be at rest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A SUNDAY AT BAR HARBOR.

OF all the Sundays passed at Bar Harbor, none had been fairer than the one on which Gudule de Rosambert waited for Basil Wilmerding to accompany her to the morning service. The sea, a beaming, waveless blue, mirrored the radiant sky. Along the horizon lay a chain of dazzling, snowy cloud-mountains, which Olga had summoned her father to designate by their similitude to the Swiss mountains or those of the Pyrenees.

This accomplished, she rushed in to establish Rustoff on the top of the broad staircase, from which coigne of vantage — his usual post on Sunday — she proceeded to give him farewell instructions ere driving off to church. He bent his snowy head and pointed ears first on one side and then on the other, listening attentively to her parting injunctions. Why he could not accompany her on one day of the week, and yet attend her the remaining six, had ever been a dark mystery too profound to solve. Indignation and grief were becoming too much for Pomeranian endurance. He, Olga's best friend and most loyal protector, separated in this perplexing manner from attendance on her — his first duty and joy in life, and for no reason he could fathom! It was connected with the ringing of bells. Why? The fact overwhelmed him afresh this

charming, sunshiny morning. He turned his head from side to side with so serious, anxious, and imploring an expression that Olga was fain to cry: — "Come, Rustoff, come!" and thus end, once and forever, the painful weekly separation. But that was an impossibility! She explained her disappointment in tender Russ, bidding him await her, as usual, from the sunny top of the picturesque staircase.

Then the carriage rolled away through streets thronged with Bar Harbor tourists or summer residents, wending their way to one of its six pretty churches.

Rustoff leaped down the staircase, out through an open window, and along the road in swift pursuit of his beloved mistress. He meant at least, and at last, to see and know where she went one day in seven, and why he was excluded. Carrying his deeply fringed, silvery plume well up, with imposing ruff, erect, pointed ears, sharp black muzzle, dark eyes and beautifully fringed paws, many turned to admire the graceful creature; many more to coax him to notice them. But Rustoff was adamant to all blandishments; he was following his mistress, and he meant to find her! Fortunately for him he happened to follow the road the carriage had taken, and to his rapturous joy saw her descend therefrom and go in the church just as he reached its entrance. Hidden by the crowd, he managed to step fleetly and closely behind Olga, following her down the aisle and passing into the pew just after her.

Words cannot describe the consternation of Mrs.

Bolton and the frightened delight of Olga when the snowy head suddenly became visible.

An imperative word from Count Viazemski reduced Rustoff to silence and a recumbent position on the floor of the pew. There he remained absolutely still till the deep thunder of the organ rolled through the church, to which he responded by an involuntary very low growl of disapproval. The remainder of the service he was dumb and motionless, so overjoyed at the solved mystery and the proximity to his mistress that, entirely satisfied, he went to sleep and all but Olga forgot his presence.

In a pew just in advance of Mrs. Bolton's sat Miss Conway, Hester, Basil, and the De Rosamberts. That they were near each other was a surprise, as there was a large attendance that morning.

A stranger was to preach — a clergyman whom Basil had noticed the preceding evening as he returned to Bar Harbor. The delicate face, stooping figure, and air of invalidism had touched him one instant, to be forgotten in the next. But in spite of many tokens of impaired health the stranger's voice was strong and penetrating, and his manner intensely impressive from the earnestness with which he felt and delivered his message. He had evidently come to them fresh from an agonizing experience, suffered through another's sin. Was it through a son, a brother, or a friend that the awful revelation had touched him? His earnestness thrilled the congregation. Just before closing his sermon he advanced a few paces nearer his audience, his

voice quivering with an emotion he could not control: —

"I beseech you to remember the words, the prayer, I have given you this morning: 'Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed.'

"The devices of man only increase your malady. Concealment is not abatement. What is your pride the better for their aid? What have they done for your self-will? for your unbelief, slothfulness, irritability, prayerlessness, impulsiveness? He who created you, and whose creation you have spent your days in marring, can alone restore to you His image and make you walk in health of soul. Pray God to heal your heart, your understanding, your memory, your desires, your imagination, your hopes, your fears, your speech, your looks, your acts. Through your present condition, you are the prey of suffering in every form. All your faculties torment you. Your words come back upon you and pierce you as daggers. Your memory is continually fetching some coal of fire to you. Your desires carry you into paths where dangers lurk. Your imagination beguiles with the idea that it is your royal friend, and taking you by the hand to lead you to some canopied and luxurious seat, lets it go, and with derision sees you sink into some black abyss. Hope sits enthroned as it were a delegated angel; but a long experience leaves you unable to doubt the fact that a legion of tormenting spirits are the ministers of this still smiling enemy of your soul. Many endowments of your nature which, if you were not a moral wreck, a spiritual leper,

would each have its key to the freedom of a happiness all its own, in your corrupt condition only provide you with a torment all its own. Oh, pray to Him who alone can heal! Pray Him to release you from your own perverted will, your rash desires, your reckless imagination. Pray God, for Christ's sake, to heal, to liberate, to save you! Pray while there is time! Oh, pray, pray, pray!"

Forth into the sunshine streamed the congregation, for a space so impressed by the fervor and truth of the speaker that their thoughts and words could not return to the everyday channels of light, idle talk and careless mirth. Some soul that clergyman had seen sinking, sinking into darkness and insensibility to all that was purest, truest, loftiest, best. He had suffered agonizingly in his watch and showed painful tokens of his mental conflict and sympathy with the sufferer.

Paler and paler had grown the face of Basil as he heard his own portrait so vividly sketched. It almost seemed as if Mr. Mainwaring had known the secrets of his life and the awful fact of that summer. He had indeed "sown to the wind"! Should he as inevitably "reap the whirlwind"?

Variable in his moods, he no sooner found himself strolling along the shore with Gudule than he became the affectionate, confiding Basil she had missed for several days, who said he looked to her for every ray of his sunshine.

"But I am powerless to dispel your gloom," she replied hesitatingly. "Only recall last Thursday!"

"Do you not behold your potent influence at this moment?" he asked gayly.

"It is not my influence," she responded with conviction. "The earnest words of that true-hearted stranger have been the spell to melt the ice and warm the stream, Basil."

The mood of her companion altered on the instant. He made no reply, but his gaze was indrawn, his countenance clouded. Basil waxed sullen, oppressed by a dismal and irritating remembrance that even confession could only aggravate.

To confess! That would plunge himself and Hester into poverty, separate him from Gudule de Rosambert, clothe him with the raiment of shame, and give him the chains and prison of the law.

Up went Basil's head, his eyes flashing. "Never! Never!" he cried inwardly. "Better any mental torture than outward disgrace!"

The shadow had departed, and turning to Gudule, he was once more winning and eager in voice and manner. "I was meant to be a good man, Gudule. It is this adverse, contradictory — Oh, change for me one bitter fact in life, and I shall bring you naught but sunshine!"

"Is it not in your power to cancel the past?"

"No longer. I must reap as I have sown; nor must I regret it. To regret, to brood is to be so miserable that life is torture. I regret nothing!" And returning gloom was kept at bay.

Jack and Helen, who had renounced the drive back

from church to Bayview, were slowly walking and talking.

"I 'll tell you frankly, Helen, that promise I made you has been a great help. I should not have understood or cared for one word of Mr. Mainwaring's sermon if I had not kept it."

"O Jack, you make me very happy!"

"That 's going too far and too fast! I 'm not changed enough to make any one very happy; I only see how I can alter and am not averse to altering. That 's not quite honest! I am not so indifferent. I owe it to you, Helen, to say that I wish to change much in my life — and I intend to."

"Again I say, Jack, you make me very happy!" responded Nelly, her face beaming and her step growing lighter and lighter.

Jack gazed at her reverently, admiringly. "It only shows, Helen, that a little word may help a fellow when the speaker is sincere and lives as she teaches. Thank you, Nelly, over and over, for what you are and for what you 've done for me. I was an outrageous, surly bear, was n't I, when you came to Bar Harbor?"

"Don't call yourself names, Jack!"

"You never have been afraid to tell me the truth, and you 've told it gently and lovingly. I wonder — I wonder if Basil Wilmerding ever had any one to help him as you have helped me?"

"Oh, Hester is the sweetest sister in the world!"

"She 's had a hard, black time with him, then! It is a wonder her sweetness has not changed to bitter-

ness. She must be pure gold to bear with that fellow! Have n't you noticed how he tries her?"

"Sometimes."

"It is every day, I believe. My advice would be to let him go his own way."

"O Jack, you know you don't mean that!"

"Not exactly; but I should have meant it entirely, if I had not known you! There 's something very serious the matter with Wilmerding. He has a load on his mind, I know. Harper said he gambled to such an excess before he lost all his property that now the club are waiting to see his course with the new fortune. You remember how Rustoff hates him! We may not always know a bad fellow when we see him, but a dog never mistakes. Was n't that jolly the way Rustoff came to church? Is it wrong, in your opinion, to take a dog to church?"

"Not advisable — the danger of noise, you know," answered Nelly, laughing.

"He 'll never go again! I saw that in my mother's eye. Come on, Nelly; we 'll be late! What a day this is! Before you came I used to spend my Sundays fishing or shooting. This weather tempts me; but you may trust me, Nelly; I do not wish to be that lawless Jack again!"

Meta, standing on the veranda, leaning against a column wreathed with vines, watched her brother and cousin as they came up the path leading to Bayview. Both faces were so happy, so at ease, that she envied them — she, so troubled over many things — especially over a letter she was holding in her hand. But it was

not Meta's way to confide in any one. If perplexed and distressed, she fought her battle alone. If victorious, all was well; if defeated, no one was aware. So, while she lost much sympathy, she also escaped criticism.

Entering the cottage, they found Rustoff mounted on a chair, watching some boys in a boat out on the bay. He glanced toward Meta, but gave no evidence of pleasure at her entrance. Nelly wondered why. So far as she knew, her cousin was very attentive to the snowy Pomeranian; but he would accept dainties from no one save his mistress and her father. He owned a small primrose-hued bonbon box — a sailor hat adorned with a very narrow brown ribbon. This, often filled by Olga with crystallized amber or rosy gumdrops, he regarded with great interest, knew was his special property, and enjoyed accordingly.

Suddenly Rustoff, who always considered it his duty to express surprise or suspicion, gave vent to a succession of violent, quick barks — "Wouff! wouff! wouff!"

Jack sprang to the window, to see Basil Wilmerding leap down the narrow cliff path in the direction of his grandfather's vacant cottage.

"Why is he going there?" wondered Jack.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE CLOSE OF A BRIEF DAY.

AT sunrise a dense mist lay over Bar Harbor. All the mountains, islands, headlands, and the yacht fleet had vanished in this sea of vapor. The wind freshening as the sun rose higher, the fog slowly waxed thinner and thinner till all the beauty of sea, mountain, island and shore lay revealed in clear sunshine and sweet air.

All Bar Harbor was on the alert for the yacht race that was to take place that morning as soon as the ocean floor should be swept free of mist by sun and wind.

"Hatton, the tide is ebb, the sea smooth, and the breeze blows lightly from the southeast."

"That's right, Wilmerding; and the Amethyst is sure to win! Oh, here's a note for you, brought over by MacCormick. Isn't your sister coming?"

"No," said Basil, reading Hester's hurried lines. "Madame de Chavigni's Zelma is very ill, and neither my sister nor Mademoiselle de Rosambert can see us off."

"Madame de Chavigni's Zelma? Who is that?"

"A little Indian child she adopted. Oh, there's Ferrerton!" and Basil immediately forgot all else in the excitement of the morning.

The Amethyst was the yacht he wished to own. Already he had begun negotiations for its purchase.

In the large, airy room of Madame de Chavigni, lay Zelma with panting breath and leaping pulse, in the arms of her best and dearest friend. Two physicians were coming and going; Judith, Miss Conway, Hester, and Gudule were at hand to minister as their services were required.

"Is it a dream — a terrible dream?" Hester was asking herself as she went into an adjoining apartment to see Helen, Olga, Count Alexis, and Henri de Rosambert.

"Only three days ago, Zelma was a vision of perfect health and beauty, full of joy and happiness. In the night she was suddenly oppressed for breath, and every moment since the illness has increased; the physicians now give Madame de Chavigni little hope of keeping her," she told her friends.

Closer and closer Constance de Chavigni held her treasure, never knowing how the hours fled, till sunset, when Zelma was visibly growing weaker.

"Sky — sky!" faintly cried the child, turning where the west was a dazzling crimson, gold and purple, and a glory lay on the sea.

Madame de Chavigni bore her near the wide-open windows, holding her so that she could see the exquisite changes in the tints and forms of the clouds.

Faint smiles hovered over the lovely face, and the eyes beamed in an ecstasy of enjoyment; then, too ill

longer to enjoy, the lids softly closed and Zelma seemed to slumber.

For three days and nights Constance had hoped and prayed, while two physicians watched and sought to remove Death's cold presence from that chamber. But incessant efforts and tireless care were useless. Pneumonia held poor Zelma in a closer clasp, and soon mercifully dulled the brain to consciousness of suffering.

A dreamless repose was creeping on; the hands relaxed their hold; the head sank away from the faithful breast against which it had so fondly nestled; the eyes no longer sought the face of the Creole lady, nor did the perfect lips smile a response to the tender, love-laden gaze of Madame de Chavigni. Zelma and her friend were parting, slowly but none the less surely parting, and the end was near.

To the last Constance held the child, her pale, agonized face bending above the paler features, moistening the sweet mouth, softly pressing her kisses on the beautiful, closed eyelids.

The sun was setting and the moon rising. Amid that golden glow and silvery radiance the spirit fled. A sudden, brief shiver ran through the child's form, there was a convulsive clasp of the little hand, a sigh — and Zelma was gone.

Still Madame de Chavigni held the precious, tenantless body, bowing her head until her cheek rested against the child's cheek. Then she rose and laid her beloved burden on the bed, and sinking on her knees hid her face on the little dead child's breast.

Two days later, at sunset, Zelma's fair little form, robed in white and put in a white casket, was laid to rest where the song of the surge was never silent, and where sunset's glory and moon's soft light would ever fall.

Alone again — missing the love the child had hourly expressed in her own eloquent language of tones, looks, and broken sentences, Constance de Chavigni moved about dumb and dazed. For hours she would sit apart, or walk with Hester to the little grave — by her care already greenly sodded — where sweet, stainless lilies lay all day and roses clustered.

A cross of marble marked its head, whereon was the child's name, the day, month, and year of her passing away, her age, and two lines —

> Oh, cleanse us ere we view
> That countenance pure again.

"There is nothing more to do," said Constance de Chavigni with clasped hands as she listened to the song of the sea and saw how the waters sparkled and the sunlight and flowers made that green little grave most beautiful.

"Nothing to do — but much to suffer," she murmured.

So the long, sad, empty days passed and she mourned uncomforted.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

TOLD AT ULLESCLIFFE.

IT was the Children's Thursday Afternoon, and the grounds of the Kebo Valley Club House were gay with the little folk in festive attire. Hester, driving by with Basil, who had suddenly appeared and claimed her for an hour or two, gazed on them, full of interest and pleasure in their pretty pastimes. Up the Eagle Lake road sped the two horses. Basil, in an excited mood, talked fast, not waiting for his sister's responses. Suddenly he whirled the carriage round and flew in the direction of his grandfather's deserted cottage.

"I have something to say to you. I had better tell you there, in that evil spot that basely undid me," he muttered.

But Hester had heard and trembled.

For the remainder of the drive Basil was silent, but his face was full of a bitter unrest and sullen fury. Sweeping up to the handsome villa and throwing the reins to the groom, he sprang down, assisted his sister, and then, drawing the key from his pocket, crossed the long, broad veranda.

Hester followed, to see the door swung open and her brother striding along to the library opening out of his grandfather's room. The blinds of the rooms

were closed, but Basil nervously tossed up the casements and threw back the shutters. How forsaken, how desolate the house seemed! Hester sat down by her grandfather's empty chair.

Basil walked to and fro. "Either my good angel or an evil fiend will give me no rest till I confess to you a deed of mine that will" —

Basil paused and laughed hoarsely, his face paling and his hands twitching a chair in which he finally sat down, to immediately spring up and recommence his agitated walk.

Hester rose and linked her arm in that of Basil, causing him to pause in his restless march. Her face was pale and determined and there was that in her eyes that controlled Basil's nervousness.

"You have something to tell me. Tell it, Basil. Remember I am your sister and will not desert you."

He clutched her black gown. "I can't bear to see it, Hester!" he cried. "You have no right to wear mourning; our grandfather never loved you. To the last he defrauded and hated you!"

"No, Basil," Hester answered steadily. "He loved me."

"What proof did he leave?" scornfully retorted Basil with rising voice.

"He destroyed his will, as I saw him destroy it in my dream, and left us all."

"*I* destroyed his will!"

The words were no louder than a sigh; but Hester heard and turned cold and trembled, but she did not drop his arm.

"Why do you not move from me?" he cried, his haggard eyes resting on the lovely face that, pale as death, seemed the face of a succoring angel who could not leave a tortured soul so in need of help and consolation.

"Why? For your sake and our mother's. What will you do?"

"I do not yet know. My act was criminal. If revealed, ten or fifteen years of the state prison lie before me."

"O Basil! Basil!"

The slight figure swayed, the eyes closed, and Hester, who had never before lost consciousness, tottered and would have fallen had not Basil caught her. For some moments the misery that had smitten her was forgotten; but when she revived to the terror and pain of her life she was years older in feeling and an experience of suffering that left its impress on every feature.

Sitting up on the sofa, where Basil had laid her, she was still faint and spent, but strong in mind and heart as she gazed tenderly, sadly, on her brother.

"Upbraid, denounce me, Hester!"

"You need me too much. Oh, my poor boy!" and then her tears fell, and Basil sprang to his feet to throw his arm around her, murmuring loving words. For a moment she rested on his shoulder, then clasped his hand in hers.

"Tell me all — all, Basil."

Basil concealed nothing.

"It seemed so easy to condone my deed, Hester,

and I was so elate, so happy," he concluded. "Suddenly the scourge came — the scourge that lashed me into revealing what I had done. Day and night since I stood on Green Mountain by Count Viazemski I have suffered such mental torture that sanity seemed leaving me. 'I will not! I will not!' I cried. 'You must — you shall!' answered the other voice."

The tokens of that struggle were very marked in Basil's face and form. He bore the impress of an illness of months.

"I cannot make restitution, Hester; I dare not; I cannot face the world. Will not this ill-gotten wealth — Oh, my poor, sweet sister, into what misery I have dragged you!" and Basil's head sank on his breast and his eyes rained hot tears.

"Do not think of me, Basil. What is right is now the only question before us."

"Right?" cried Basil in horror. "'Right' would take me into prison for fifteen years and you into poverty."

"I am not afraid of poverty, Basil."

"Hush!" moaned he.

Hester gazed sadly at her grandfather's chair. Then he had not really loved her, after all; he had not forgiven or forgotten. The pain of this stabbed her till she caught her breath and sank back among the pillows with closed eyes to gather up her strength to know what was right for Basil and herself.

"This is your birthday, Hester."

"Yes; I am twenty-one."

"What a memory I have linked forever with the

day!" cried her brother. "I had sent for some jewels but could not give them; I had no right. O Hester, why do I care? Why am I haunted by my act night and day so that I cannot rest? 'Our very wishes give us not our wish,'" he added, gloomily. "Why could not grandfather have saved me from this deed?"

It was the question Hester had just asked herself.

"Send Carter back with the horses, Basil; I can walk. I would rather walk. Those horses do not belong to us."

Basil clenched his hand and leaped to his feet. "I was goaded to tell you, Hester; to share my secret, my infamy — but there it must end. You cannot, you dare not, expose me. Promise — vow it to me!" he concluded huskily, his face haggard, his eyes wrathful, yet frightened.

"I will never expose you, Basil. It is for you to make restitution — for you to speak; or, rather," Hester clasped his hand in hers, her face brightening, "this, this I believe will be right: never to touch another coin of grandfather's. Find work — honest work. Then, as fast as we can learn his wishes expressed in the will you destroyed, we will give the money as he desired, by and by, thus restoring all you have taken."

Basil wrenched his hand from Hester's, tossing back his head.

"Is that your scheme? Never!"

"I shall work, Basil; or go to Miss Patty till" —

"Till she divines something is wrong! Are you

insane, Hester? Think how narrow a step lies between me and imprisonment! Will you eternally disgrace our mother's name?"

"Our mother's name is sacred, Basil. You know I shall never reveal aught that would pain her — shame her." Then she added in so low a tone that Basil bent his head to listen: "But — there is one way; the way she would commend."

"And that way I'll not take!" cried Basil. "Having told you, I am released of half the burden."

"Oh, why, why did you tell me? But that regret is utter weakness. I am glad I know. Together we will be brave to do what is right. Yes, Basil; we will, we must."

"And what of Gudule?"

Hester had not thought of her.

Basil laughed bitterly. "Would you have me tell her?" he asked. "You know I cannot. According to your scheme, neither can I wed her."

"No."

"No?" angrily repeated Basil.

"If Gudule truly cares for you, she would not shrink from" —

"I'll never treat her so cruelly — so wickedly! She shall not suffer and struggle with me."

"But if she knew all, neither would she marry you."

"I'm not sure."

"I am."

"Then she shall never know! I'll not be disgraced before my world, Hester; nor will I run the risk of the doom I mentioned. Beware how you draw

it on me! Promise — vow to me!" He caught Hester's arm, holding it so fiercely that she bit her lip to prevent a cry of pain.

"You can plan, Basil; you can defy God and man; but remember — oh, remember, my dear brother, that there is no security against the one eternal law that what one sows that one reaps, and nothing else — nothing else!"

Basil tossed her arm from him and strode to the door.

"Come! There is no need to linger here. Carter! shut those blinds and windows, lock the door, and follow us to the hotel with the key."

"We must wait for him, Basil," objected Hester.

"Tut!" Then aloud to the groom, "I 've changed my mind; lock up and then jump into your place. It won't take a moment."

In a few seconds the carriage was speeding over the road, Ullescliffe once more silent and forsaken.

Every one was driving, it seemed. Hester was forced to bow and smile as she encountered one familiar face after another.

Basil's countenance was fast losing its worn aspect, so noticeable in the weeks just passed. Having shared his burden, its horror seemed half gone. Oh, if all the load would leave him as free as he had been just after his grandfather's death! Yet the terror, as of nightmare, might return.

Basil pondered. He was then helpless in its grasp — stricken by an influence he could neither understand nor resist. Was it the power of the super-

natural? Was it God dealing with him? He shrank from the thought.

The weight Basil had partly dislodged from his mind fell with terrible force on his sister's sensitive, conscientious nature. How to renounce the wealth never bequeathed her, and yet not expose her brother, was now the problem that oppressed her night and day. The struggle was more or less apparent to those who loved her, and whose knowledge of Basil was such that they immediately divined that he was the cause of her distress.

But Hester was brave, and her will assisted her in concealing much of the anxiety and sorrow that had stolen all peace. To think, to ponder, to plan had become a necessity and she longed to be alone. The shock of Basil's sin and its results had overpowered her. Oh, if there were one person in the world to whom she could speak! some one who could confirm her in her sense of right — in her conviction that her grandfather's wealth must not be used by Basil or herself.

"But he should have willed it to you," was the inward whisper of some wily, evil, haunting spirit. From it she shrank affrighted, knowing its intent to weaken her rectitude.

Day after day Hester wandered alone near the sea, the ever-restless surge congenial to the ever-restless thoughts that pained and harassed her. Basil noted her altered aspect. After searching vainly for her, one afternoon, he found her at last seated on a ledge of rocks far down the shore. He threw himself beside her angry, nervous, repentant.

"I never should have told you! But unshared the burden was killing me, Hester! And it is building up a wall between Gudule and me. Is that to be a part of my punishment?"

Basil gazed moodily over the sea and out toward Schooner Head, where the waves were clanging and roaring, throwing their foam high in air.

"Gudule feels there is something on your mind, you mean?"

"Yes; I cannot be free and careless as I was. When I am talking with her, a cloud suddenly drops over me — a cloud of awful apprehension. Could it — could my deed be discovered, Hester?" he asked in low, nervous tones.

"I cannot conceive how, Basil; only, sooner or later, an act always seems doomed to carry its own revealing."

"There is always the sea" — So sinister, so peculiar was the tone that Hester caught his hand, not daring to dwell on the awful thought his words and voice suggested.

"O my brother — for my sake, for our mother's sake!" and Hester, who had passed a sleepless night and tortured morning, sobbed uncontrollably.

"Come, let us go out in my boat. What a day it is! Such a sky, such an air! See the gulls, Hester. Ah, do not weep. Pity me — pity *me!* It is harder for me than for you; and I thought I was only securing our happiness. How could I know this cursed wealth would poison all my peace and yours?"

Erect, with folded arms and moody face, Basil gazed across the width of sunlit water.

"You love me more than Gudule loves me! To confide in her would be to part us forever. She would not live on this ill-gotten gain; neither could she regard me without indignant disapproval. Therefore, trust me, Hester, she shall never know;" and Basil smiled so evil a smile that Hester trembled. "Well, it is done, and I must abide by what I have done. Exposed, there is one course always open. That course is safe, quick, and"—

"Basil, that course leads to the death of all hope, all future safety and happiness. It would separate you eternally from mother and"—

"Say no more, Hester! What must be must be; what will be will be. Only know, once for all, that I will not live one moment after my deed is known. If you care for me, beware how you expose me by your acts, your looks, or words. Perhaps my fear is mere nervousness; but I am possessed with the haunting certainty that somehow, in some way, all will be revealed. Bah! Help me to overcome this irrational mood and let us 'eat, drink, and be merry'!"

Basil threw his arm round his sister, who shrank from his touch; then clung to him, as if to shield and save him from himself and the due reward of his deeds which might yet be in store for them.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RUSTOFF.

META was holding a bunch of fresh fern leaves and clusters of the scarlet pigeonberry, gazing on them in a dreamy way, as if they recalled some memorable association. Graceful baskets of roses, and roses in great fragrant bunches, from friends resident at Bar Harbor in summer time, or temporary guests at the hotels, decked her room.

Never had she passed so charming, so gay a season. Concerts, luncheons, tennis, and lawn parties in the morning; afternoon teas and drives; evening dinners and dances. "All the world" devoted entirely to pleasure seemed to be at Mount Desert, and many notables — the Russian, Belgian, Portuguese, French, and Turkish ministers from the diplomatic corps at Washington. The beauties, the marvels of Mount Desert seemed a blank page to these hundreds of men and women who only came to seek each other, not to enjoy what nature was offering with such lavish hands.

"I shall be thankful when society has gone!" exclaimed Helen. "We cannot walk, drive, climb, or row anywhere without this incessant crowd who are only busy with themselves, their gowns, and the impression they are creating."

Jack Bolton laughed and applauded, promising

Helen many unmarred hours after the first of September, when these butterflies would flit away to other resorts or their city residences.

While Nelly spoke, Meta still gazed absently at her fern leaves, forgetful of the deliciously fragrant amber, crimson, creamy, and pink roses around her. The ferns had magically spirited her away to shadowy, sunshiny Duck Brook Glen, where she was once more listening to Henri de Rosambert's story to little Olga Viazemski, in which Paulinus, asleep on his fern bank, suggested anew the thoughts that had from that moment startled and pursued her through many hours and days. Added to this memory were the fervent words of Mr. Mainwaring on the previous Sunday. These combined, caused Meta to feel she was an aggrieved creature. Why should she remember restlessly, self-reproachfully, when society forgot?

And then — Zelma's death! Her own strictures on the tender act of Madame de Chavigni smote her perpetually; and now all was over. The lovely child, for a brief space loved and sheltered, had closed her pathetically beautiful eyes. The little feet would wander out no more toward the sunset, the pretty hands no longer clasp each other at the sumptuous colors of the sky, the little form no longer bound in ecstasy. Could she have brought no sweet garlands to that brief day? A choking sob rose in Meta's throat. Then, unobserved, she carried all her rare flowers and scattered them remorsefully over the little grave.

There Madame de Chavigni found her.

"Oh, how kind of you!" softly exclaimed the lonely woman.

"It is a late kindness," responded Meta. "Oh, forgive me — here — that I never gave Zelma one rose in life! What matters it that I heap them on her grave now she has gone?" Overcome with this penitent memory — only one of many bitter recollections — the girl bowed her head and wept unrestrainedly.

"Then you loved my little darling?" Constance asked tenderly, wistfully.

"No; I never loved her!" passionately exclaimed Meta. "I have only cared for myself — first and last. But I am tired of myself — oh, so tired!"

Then, raising her head and half smiling, with a sudden change of mood — "How amazed society would be at my admission of weariness! And it goes for naught, for to-night, to-morrow, every day till the season closes, you will hear of me as the gayest of the gay. And I do enjoy it all — till it is over; and then there is nothing that remains with me: no results from the summer to give me one moment's pure or lasting happiness. Do not mourn for Zelma, give thanks she spread her wings and floated away where there is neither anxiety nor sorrow."

"I try to dwell much on that comforting thought. Still I so love and miss her that there are hours when a selfish longing would bring her back. I can only console the yearning by remembering that she is always mine to remember — though not to touch, to teach, to help, to see, to caress. How utterly she has

gone away! How empty are my rooms, my days, without her!"

There were no tears in the beautiful eyes gazing out over the sea. The sorrow and loneliness of Constance de Chavigni lay too deep for tears to relieve, or even to express her unutterable longing.

"Ah, Meta, you have all your life before you; may it be blessedly happy — never desolate like mine! Yet to have known the precious joy that has been mine was worth the suffering that followed. Yes; rather would I have learned the bitter and awful meaning of an experience like mine than never to have possessed the happiness that blessed me so long ago! We are plunged in sore and cruel straits, Meta, when we must choose the one to have once had the other! I shall need all the teachings of eternity to" —

Madame de Chavigni turned again toward the sea.

"I wish I could recall the whole of a sweet little poem I knew: —

> Ah, little child with flowers in hand,
> Upon our earthly borderland,
> Lying in white dreams wonderful!
> Men deem it strange that thou shouldst cross
> Into a world so sorrowful,
> To make it harder with thy loss.

Yet so inexpressibly lovely while it lingered with us! Better a thousandfold to have had its pure presence than never to have seen, to have known that joy. Come, Meta!" and the elder lady rose, lovingly placing several sprays of white, fragrant lilies at the head of Zelma's grave; then, linking the girl's arm

in hers, the two left the lonely, beloved spot bathed in the glowing rays of sunset.

"To-night it will be silvery with moonlight; Zelma would like it so."

After parting with Madame de Chavigni at her hotel, Meta in a softened mood went on slowly toward Bayview. Quick, eager steps overtook her.

"How weary you seem!" said Geoffrey Hatton, his tones laden with sympathy, and giving Meta the support of his strong arm.

"A little tired, but not now unhappy."

"And not wearing one of my roses?"

"No. All are now lying on Zelma's little grave. Not that I did not value those you sent me, Geoffrey. It was because I cared for them that I wished to lay there what in other days I would have kept for self alone. Oh, I am — I have been — so supremely selfish! Have you no charm to lure me from this chilly shadow?"

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

Is that it?"

"Yes; I thought so at Zelma's grave; and I thought so that lovely day in Duck Brook Glen; and again last Sunday when Mr. Mainwaring was speaking. But if it is only and always acknowledging and not changing" — added Meta with a sigh.

"You received my letter?"

"Yes."

"And"—

"Are you are not afraid, Geoffrey, that 'self' entering into your life will not 'pass in music out of sight'?"

"I fear nothing, Meta, but to lose the music you alone can bring, and are, and have always been, and will be to me!"

The moon had risen. Olga and Rustoff were out on the veranda awaiting Count Viazemski's return from his call on the Russian minister. Olga, perched on the carved balcony, was anxiously watched by the Pomeranian lest she should receive an injury. From time to time he would utter his "Wouff! wouff!" of warning, when she seemed to forget the height of the balustrade, leaning over farther than to his canine judgment seemed safe or advisible. With ears cocked, in all the alert yet stately beauty of glistening ruff and plume waving high above his back, he gazed at Olga full of eagerness and amazement when she suddenly sprang from the balcony to speed down the graveled path leading to the entrance of the Bayview grounds.

Following her, as was his duty, his whole frame, from the tip of his black muzzle to the tip of his feathery tail, was tremulous with excitement when he saw his mistress open the broad and lofty gates to descend the road in her impatience at her father's unusually prolonged absence.

Rustoff knew, as well as did Olga, that they were on strictly forbidden ground; but if his mistress

stepped outside the gates of Bayview, it was clearly his duty to follow and protect her. Under the risen moon the road, the sky, and sea were irradiated. Unseen by Olga some one was watching on the other side of the gate.

Suddenly a long strong arm seized Rustoff, and a man leaped with him across the bright road in the direction of the sea.

"How dare you! How dare you! He is my dog — mine — mine!" cried Olga, beside herself with anger and terror, flying after the thief, who rushed like the wind, while Rustoff struggled and bit and growled and barked.

Jack Bolton heard the screams and the frantic "Wouff! wouff! wouff!" and came speeding down to the open gates, but too late.

"Oh, a man — a wicked man — has stolen my Rustoff!" gasped Olga, white as death, quivering in every limb, and running on toward the shore.

Vain pursuit! A boat was swiftly gliding away in the moonlight, rowed by vigorous arms, and in the boat was the Pomeranian, unable to return to his beloved mistress. Sea, sky, and rocks all swam and faded before Olga's sight and she sank in a heap at Jack's feet.

"Oh, you poor child!"

Marfa, Meta, Geoffrey Hatton, and Helen had recognized Olga's voice and had seen Jack leap at the sound. They were close behind him, and in a second all five were seeking to soothe the bereft child.

Count Viazemski was driving in at the gates. Jack

shouted, and presently Olga was lifted by her father, only to wrench herself free and cry: —

"Some one — oh, all go! — take me — get a boat — find him — find my Rustoff!"

Jack explained to Count Alexis.

"How did Olga and Rustoff happen to be outside the gates?"

"Oh, I — you did not come, papa. Rustoff and I ran out to look for you. Yes — I disobeyed. It was not Rustoff's fault; he ran out after me to take care of me. And now — Rustoff!" A flood of tears concluded the sentence.

"We will find him, Olga," answered her father firmly, yet tenderly. "Look at me, my dear, dear little daughter!"

The child threw her arms round his neck, and, though still sobbing, was somewhat assured and comforted. Her father could not fail in what he attempted!

"But if that man should carry Rustoff away — away to sell him or ill-treat, starve, or beat him? Oh, it's all my fault, because I disobeyed papa;" and again Olga was overcome with anguish and terror lest suffering should befall her treasure. She looked up into the sky. "Only the moon can see now where that thief is carrying my Rustoff. O moon, moon! make him kind to my poor little dog!"

Olga was so excited and overwhelmed by fright and sorrow that Count Alexis gathered her up in his arms and carried her into Bayview.

"Listen, Olga! Rustoff has been stolen to secure

a reward. He is too beautiful and valuable to be ill-treated. I shall advertise his loss immediately and promise so large a remuneration for his restoration as to make his return an object. In the meantime, I will send out half a dozen men in boats to every island and point where it would be possible for that thief to secrete him."

"O thou good papa! And not yet one black word of my naughty — It is I who alone am to blame!" and Olga buried her face on her father's breast and was silent.

Two days, three days passed and no tidings came from Rustoff. It was possible he had been carried far away from Mount Desert. Who would not purchase such a rarely beautiful creature?

Olga mourned and moaned. When not standing on the shore, or out on the bay with her father, she was on her knees praying. "God can see; God knows; and God can give me Rustoff once more — though I don't deserve him," was always the piteous conclusion. "Was not Rustoff 'a good gift and a perfect gift,' papa? Then he 'came from above — from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning.' Miss Hester showed me the words, and she thought God would not repent that he had given me Rustoff."

"It might mean that, my Olga."

"And Rustoff was 'a thought of God,' was n't he? Oh, such a beautiful thought! Would he permit that thief to harm, to kill him?"

"We may trust not. But if Rustoff was taken from you because you are so unwilling to bend your will to what is right?"

"Yes; I have remembered that," rejoined Olga with a profound sigh. "But if I may be once more trusted with Rustoff, I 'll never, never, never forget the lesson, papa."

"Then losing Rustoff may bring you a blessing, my dear little daughter."

"Yes — if he comes back to me."

Then Olga, with such a pain in her heart as she had never known before, waited and mourned and could not be comforted while she did not hear his "Wouff! wouff! wouff!" resounding in the air.

Where was Rustoff? He was secured in a cavern on Burnt Porcupine Island, terrified, forlorn, and refusing to eat or drink. Jem Todd had often noticed him with the Russian gentleman and his little golden-haired daughter, and, learning of the former's great wealth, determined to capture the beautiful, snowy favorite and obtain a large reward for his ransom. He had long sought an opportunity; early and late he had cautiously lingered around Bayview. The evening of Rustoff's capture, Todd had quite despaired of ever entrapping a treasure so carefully guarded. Great was his triumph as he plunged down the steep path to the shore where he kept a boat always in readiness; he was elate as he rowed away across the moonlit water, his long-sought prize at last secure! That Rustoff would not eat or drink, that he carried his royal plume at half-mast, that he

growled menacingly whenever Jem approached, and shrank farther away from him in one corner of his gloomy prison — were all significant tokens that if liberty and restoration to his mistress were not soon accorded, death from grief and starvation would deprive his jailer of the large reward Count Alexis had offered. For the dead dog — nothing; for the living Pomeranian five hundred dollars!

Jem caught his breath. He had never even seen such a sum of money. He must not lose his chance. So on the afternoon of the third day he hurried to Bar Harbor to change his working suit for more suitable clothing in which to restore Rustoff, while concocting as plausible a tale as he could invent of having heard a dog bark on the island and hastening to his rescue.

Rustoff, meanwhile, faint from hunger, grief, and terror, was crouched in the dark cavern wondering, dog-fashion, over the woe that had befallen him. Eat? No; he'd never eat again — there! Had his mistress forgotten him? Could she not find him? He could have found her in strange lands by his scent alone! Oh, she could not forget Rustoff! Then she was mourning as he was mourning. Oh, he must reach her! must make her hear him!

With sudden animation and a wild hope he sprang at the boards fencing him within the cave, growled, and then barked violently.

"There he is! There he is!" and Jack, who had been rowing for hours seeking Rustoff, pulled in the direction of the clamorous sound.

Beaching his boat, Jack ran up, calling "Rustoff! Rustoff!"

The Pomeranian responded anew, leaping in frantic delight, and trying to force his way through the planks that had been nailed halfway down the interior of the cave.

With a hammer which he had remembered to bring, Jack soon liberated the dog, and in a few moments Rustoff, who had never before cared for Jack or allowed him to touch a hair of his glistening ruff or plume, was leaping on him hailing him as his deliverer.

"Now, Rustoff, quick — quick!" and Jack dashed back to his boat, launched it, and with the rapturous Pomeranian at his side began pulling for the shore. He paused an instant to sweep the bay with his glass. A suspicious craft was bearing down from Bar Harbor. Jack pulled off his coat.

"Lie down, Rustoff! I must hide, cover, you."

Using his glass again, he discerned the face of Jem Todd.

"Whew!" whistled Jack softly. "Are you the man?" Skirting round the other side of the island, he awaited consequences.

On came Jem, mistrusting nothing. He had met several boats containing the count's seekers, all desirous of securing the large reward. Finally he espied Master Bolton minus his coat.

"A warm day, sir!" sang out Jem.

Whereat Rustoff, recognizing the hated voice of his captor, indulged in a smothered growl of rage.

"Very hot!" returned Jack. "I'm more comfortable without my coat."

"Ay, ay!" sang back Jem Todd.

Then how Jack plied his oars for Rustoff's deliverance, knowing that, his loss discovered, Todd would make a fight for his recapture!

Nor was Master Bolton a moment too soon. Todd leaped ashore, ran up to the cavern, saw the wrenched-off boards, and knew he had lost that dazzling ransom money! With an oath and an evil clouding of his face he rushed back to his boat.

"If I can't have the five hundred, I can shoot that dog; and I will!"

Muttering imprecations as he went, he pulled with a will across the width of shining water, but only to see Jack spring on the Bar Harbor wharf and the snowy fur of the stolen dog gleam in the sunlight.

"I'm dashed!" cried Todd, turning his boat around that he might later reach Mount Desert in a more composed manner.

"Olga! he's come — Rustoff's come!" cried panting Jack, tearing up the path to Bayview, the flying feet of the Pomeranian preceding him.

Frantic leaps of joy, circles of rapture, ecstatic "wouffs" were heard as Olga's arms were flung around him.

"Neighbor! neighbor! I'll never forget you to my dying day! Nor will Rustoff;" for the Pomeranian had run to Jack and was testifying the most ardent

gratitude by caresses and waving feathery plume that once more curled proudly in its proper place.

Olga's thanksgivings were sincere and fervent, causing Rustoff to participate by his presence in what she knew he would also offer gratefully, if he understood his deliverance as did she.

CHAPTER XXXV.

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND.

AS usual, the morning's mail brought Basil many letters. Idly opening and glancing at their contents, he suddenly seemed to cease breathing. The fifth envelope revealed an enclosed letter folded in a half sheet of note paper containing these words:

Mr. Wilmerding, — Mr. Harcourt, your late grandfather, entrusted to my care the accompanying letter to send you six weeks after his death. I am, sir, respectfully,

NEW YORK, August 31. JOHN CLINTON.

John Clinton had been in the service of Mr. Harcourt thirty years. The enclosed letter was in the well-remembered handwriting of his grandfather. Staring at his own name on the sealed envelope, Basil delayed examining its contents. A foreboding of evil paralyzed him; a great horror of the present and the future overshadowed him.

"Hester!" To his consciousness he seemed to shriek the name; in reality it was uttered scarcely above a whisper.

"Hester!" He essayed the effort a second time.

Her name more clearly uttered attracted Hester's attention and she hurried to Basil from an adjoining apartment. He handed her Clinton's brief lines and his grandfather's letter. Hester became almost as pale as Basil.

"Read it — read it! End the suspense!" she cried.

"You must open it," answered Basil in a hoarse whisper.

Hester tore open the envelope, casting her eyes on the sheet, then sank on a chair by Basil's side murmuring, —

"He knew it — he knew it!"

"What?"

"That you — see; read for yourself."

ULLESCLIFFE, July 20.

You may wonder that, knowing your infamy, I forbore to expose you. I believed that six weeks of unrighteous possession would punish you more effectually than if I denounced you the moment I discovered you had been tampering with my private business box. In your presence I remember saying I should not reopen my carefully adjusted papers; but an urgent impulse induced me to disregard my assertion; the result you know.

I am much mistaken in my estimate of human nature if six weeks of unlawful possession will not have been weeks of measureless mental torture. You will know, when this letter lies in your hand, that almost unlimited wealth does not confer happiness; perhaps this bitter knowledge is worth the sin — the crime — you have committed.

But you are not to possess an inheritance I never designed for you. Soon after the receipt of this letter your act will be known by the world you so dread, yet honor. I have taken means to spread this knowledge.

For the sake of my Lucy's Hester, I hesitated. Her I love and trust. If she doubts this, beseech her to suspend her judgment for a brief period.

In the mean time, find work, honest work. Infamous as you are, perhaps you are worth saving eventually.

BAR HARBOR. JOHN HARCOURT.

Dumb, dazed, Basil read to the conclusion and then sat staring at his grandfather's letter or gazing blankly

at Hester. His anguish of mind was intolerable; nor was that of his sister less.

"I understand it all," Basil said at last, rising, while his limbs tottered from excitement and his voice trembled. "The morning I went to the Indian encampment I told you Mr. Nevvins, of New York, was with grandfather, and I could be excused. He must have revealed all to him, and with his assistance written another will witnessed by his signature and that of Clinton or Dawson. And now" —

The haggard face turned on Hester was white as death. She threw her arms round his neck.

"Let me go with you, Basil — oh, let me! I will work for and with you. We may be very poor, but we will be honest and brave."

With an oath Basil unclasped her hands and pushed her from him.

"When I go, I go alone. Where I go, I have not yet decided. To make an end of it all would be easy, but for my mother's sake and yours I resist that temptation."

"Oh, thank God!" cried Hester. "I could not endure that crime on your soul and live."

"How soon could Nevvins" —

"That is only your impression, Basil," responded Hester eagerly. "You do not know that Mr. Nevvins received grandfather's confidence."

"There was no one else save Clinton to whom he would speak freely."

"May it not have been Monsieur de Rosambert or Count Alexis?"

"Ha!" Basil clutched Hester's arm for support, while waves of hot shame seemed to flow over and submerge him. "O Hester — Hester!" he gasped, "I cannot face this disgrace, this misery. I told you how it would be. Better, far better the sea!" He extended his arms as though oblivion beneath its cold waves would be welcome.

But Hester clung to him and his purpose changed.

"Fortunately, I drew out a large sum of money day before yesterday for the purchase of Geoffrey Hatton's yacht Amethyst, which won the race. I have a right to that much of grandfather's estate; at least I shall use it!" with a brief, mirthless laugh. "I shall go far, far away and find some means of self-support. That secured, I 'll send for you, Hester; and when I 'm able, be very sure" — Basil's face was suddenly livid with hate as, leaving his sentence unfinished, he exclaimed, "Is grandfather enjoying the peace, the bliss, the rest of heaven? Never, never!" He threw up his arms, his countenance that of one whose sanity was tottering. Then he caught Hester in his arms and kissed her for farewell.

"Tell Gudule never to think of me. Stay — I must write it, or she will not believe you."

"O Basil — Basil!"

The brief note was scribbled, folded, directed, and Hester thrust it in her pocket.

"O my brother! — my brother! wait, remain" —

But Basil had passed from her presence. All grew dark around the heart-broken girl and she lost consciousness.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

FLIGHT.

THE days that followed were days of intense mental suffering to Hester. The newspapers were avoided, then as eagerly scanned, but no mention of Mr. Harcourt's destroyed will appeared on their pages.

To Gudule the hurried note had been given.

"It means — it means" — and Gudule de Rosambert caught Hester's hand as she gazed piteously upon her.

"Basil was obliged to go away suddenly. His absence may be indefinitely prolonged."

"But I would have shared his anxiety, his trouble," cried poor Gudule.

"His trouble could not be shared, dear Gudule."

"It concerned another?"

"It was due to the act of another."

"Then Basil is blameless!" eagerly cried the girl, her haunting fear instantly removed.

Hester was silent.

"You know Basil's secret?"

"Yes."

"Do you tell me he did right to go?"

"He could not but go."

"For another's sake?"

"For his own sake and the act of that other."

"I trust him. The future will redeem my faith in him! He has suffered — oh, how Basil has suffered!" Gudule responded brokenly.

"Yes," cried poor Hester, her tears falling, and clasping Gudule's hand, inexpressibly grateful for her love and loyalty.

"What shall you tell the others, Hester?"

"I will tell them what I have told you; he was obliged to go suddenly through the act of another."

"That is true, and that is enough."

"All will forget him too soon!"

But *would* they forget, came the stinging question, when the world should hear of his crime? Oh, need it be revealed? Could not that awful shame be spared them? To whom could she appeal? To whom had her grandfather confided the secret? Now that Basil had renounced the inheritance and would hereafter sustain himself, why need the public learn of the deed? But renouncing such an estate would inevitably cause the world to wonder, to prattle. Distracted, agonized, Hester walked her room, shunning all her friends save Gudule. She knew Basil's absence was already arousing comments and suspicions, though no one mentioned his name in her presence.

Restless and unhappy she wandered alone down the shore and sat on a rock to think. The ocean lay gray and tranquil under a gray sky. In her present mood the sombre tints soothed and harmonized with her dejected feeling. The sunlit sea of yesterday had been too joyous a picture not to oppress a heart so sad and anxious as hers.

The early days of autumn had already thinned the hotels of most of their guests. The distinguished members of the diplomatic corps, the officers of the naval squadron, and the resplendent leaders of fashionable life were gone. Some enthusiastic artists still remained, transferring to their canvas the majesty and rare beauty of Mount Desert scenery; and some of the summer residents lingered, who most enjoyed the island after the brilliant crowd had vanished.

Hester was thankful for the quiet of the empty towpath that morning; but she was fated not to be alone. Coming toward her she presently saw Count Alexis, Olga, and Rustoff. In an instant she wished to rush away, as she had evaded Henri de Rosambert's presence and sympathy yesterday. Did he not know the reason of Basil's flight? Did Count Alexis?

"Play with Rustoff there, my darling; I desire to speak to Miss Wilmerding;" and asking permission to take a seat by her side, Count Alexis descanted on the day and other minor topics. There was an unconscious evidence of sympathy in his eyes and voice that immediately assured Hester that her companion was aware of her mental suffering and its cause.

Why should he care? Why should any one care save herself and Gudule, who still believed in and loved Basil, and who could not dream of the shame and agony she was enduring? thought Hester.

"When do you expect to hear from your brother?'

"I have no expectation as to the time," she responded, trying to speak quietly.

"Is Mr. Wilmerding a regular correspondent?"

Hester suddenly scanned the face of Count Viazemski. Was he seeking to learn Basil's whereabouts to betray him? Oh, surely not, if she dared trust his face!

"O Count Viazemski, pray do not question me!" exclaimed Hester, almost unable to bear the torture of his presence.

"I must make an end of this pain, for your sake!" abruptly responded Alexis Viazemski. "Trust me — confide in me; I know all."

"Then you know" — and Hester's face was pallid and her eyes closed in dread of his answer.

"Yes; I know all. Your grandfather spoke to me, relied on me."

"And you will" —

"Do nothing to grieve you."

"Ah!" Hester drew a long breath and gazed at her companion.

"But your duty?" was wrung from her in spite of herself.

"My duty was hedged around with a wide margin of compassion, by your grandfather's express desire; and it was almost wholly for your sake."

"Then he did love me a little?" Hester questioned wistfully.

"He loved you deeply."

"Why" —

"Why did he not protect your future?"

"Yes; and Basil's? Basil was as near of kin as I — his daughter's only son. How my mother loved

Basil! For her dear sake he should have been more tender, more pitiful."

"Your brother was absolutely antagonistic in mind and character; and so associated with your father from his resemblance to him in form and feature, that" —

"I understand. Poor papa! He was never forgiven for winning my mother from her father; yet he was in every way worthy — the noblest" — Hester's voice broke and she turned toward the sea to conceal her emotion.

"An old man's anger and sorrow are sad to witness; and his penitence no less moving."

"His penitence?"

"Yes; your grandfather did repent and would have done much for Basil, had not his crime confirmed all Mr. Harcourt's prejudices and strengthened every resolution against him. As it was — Oh, believe that for your sake, when he could no longer trust your brother, he evaded even his own judgment and sought to lighten his condemnation."

"What do you mean?" Hester turned eagerly to her companion.

"I mean that your grandfather empowered me to conceal his grandson's act, if he showed unmistakable evidence of penitence."

Hester's hands unconsciously clasped each other, and her whole soul sped heavenward in thanksgiving. For some moments there was silence.

"You can tell me if your brother" —

"Oh, he is penitent!" cried Hester. "That is" — and she paused.

"Do not try to explain; I understand. The dread of a revelation, the terror, the consequent anger mingled with a sense of injustice — all combine at present to form a mood not just what your grandfather meant by penitence."

"Yes; I know," answered Hester faintly. "Still" — and she gazed imploringly at Count Alexis.

"I shall wait."

"Oh, thank you!"

"At the same time there must be no revelation to Basil of your grandfather's instructions to me. He must be allowed a chance to redeem his past — to become what the son of such a mother surely has the capacity of becoming."

Hester's eyes beamed unspeakable gratitude.

"To know he could evade the law — could have his life ordered as though he had never committed that crime — do you not feel that you must not permit your love for your brother to harm him? Love him so deeply, so truly, as to allow him to suffer for a time, that he may be purified, uplifted by that suffering. Is it not thus our heavenly Father deals wisely, tenderly with us, his children?"

"Yes," murmured Hester. "But in the meantime, if Basil has no hope, no outlook" —

"I will see to that, so far as I may. Your brother and my dear old friend's grandson shall not suffer too bitterly. I shall spare him useless pain. Pain is a means, not an end, you know."

"Have you an idea where Basil may be?"

"On his way to Russia."

"Russia!" Hester started and gazed appalled on Count Alexis.

"I knew that in his present mood the farther he could escape from America the more chance he would have for calmness and strength to face the consequences of his crime as it affected his future."

"But to — Russia!"

"Does Russia seem so far — too far?" Count Alexis' fine face was eloquent with an expression Hester did not notice; for, lost in painful and amazed thought, she was again gazing over the sea.

"It seems very, very far," she answered dreamily, "but then" — and her lovely face was turned to her companion, beaming with thankfulness. "Oh, how much I owe you! how much Basil owes you! For it is to you we are both indebted for this kind, wise thought. I am also sure you deepened grandfather's benevolent intentions by your words, your — It is so!" as she caught the half-smile of her companion. "Now tell me what Basil will do in Russia. Oh, I feel another creature!" and relieved from the overpowering burden of anxiety and fear that had so harassed her, she was again the Hester Count Alexis had first seen at Bar Harbor and studied with an interest of which she was unconscious.

"But first, may I know how you communicated with my brother?"

"I was aware when your grandfather's letter, entrusted to Clinton, would reach Basil, and I surmised that he would rush immediately from Mount Desert.

I at once wrote a letter to follow him to his club in New York: I was sure he would seek that familiar haunt before deciding on any course."

"Oh, how thoughtful! how kind! And Basil?"

"As gently as possible I told him what his grandfather had confided to me: that all now depended on himself, whether the world should know, or be ignorant of, his crime. I offered him the supervision of some of my estates in Russia and a secretaryship — both very remunerative."

"And he?" Hester's eyes were brimming with grateful tears.

Count Alexis handed her Basil's answer.

"Oh, my dear, dear brother!" she murmured while reading his broken expressions of thankfulness and obligation to his "best and wisest friend," his penitence and full confession to his "only helper in a time of dire suffering and necessity." He accepted the home in far-away Russia as a safe and blessed spot in which to atone and make restitution — too good for such as he.

Evidently Basil was much changed, though not yet all Hester yearned to have him.

"But it will come! it will come!" She felt a happiness and peace that had not been hers in her anxiety for her wayward, reckless brother since her mother's death left her alone.

"And what of Gudule? When Basil is established, would she live in Russia?"

"She cannot be deeply attached to your brother if the distance causes a moment's hesitation."

"That is true."

"Then you do not really think" — eagerly began Alexis Viazemski, and paused.

"That it is too far for me to seek Basil? Oh, no!" her face radiant, her heart joyfully beating and absolutely unconscious of the import of Count Alexis' unfinished sentence.

"But Basil does not mention me."

"Oh, yes. I received another note in which he devises for you a monthly allowance that will relieve you from all present and future anxiety."

Hester did not know that, for her sake, Count Alexis had given Basil such remuneration for his services as would permit him to guard his sister from all pecuniary embarrassment.

"You know the contents of the will Basil destroyed?"

"When your grandfather confided in me he gave me its details."

"All is to flow in those same channels?"

"No. Mr. Harcourt prepared another will that Clinton and I witnessed. That divided his estate to suit later views; but its contents are not to be divulged until six months after the day of his death."

"Then nothing can be done at present."

"No; provided your brother has honestly complied with your grandfather's just requirements. When I make known that there is a will in my possession, Mr. Harcourt's lawyers will not know but that he alone destroyed the will they witnessed, and Basil will be entirely shielded."

"How tender a heart grandfather carried beneath his bitterness!" exclaimed Hester, overcome by this consideration for her brother and lamenting the harassing misunderstandings that had separated them at Ullescliffe.

"Did I not thus assure you that evening on Green Mountain? I have rarely met one, so wronged in his own estimation, who so relented and delicately sought to save the offender."

Hester's tears were falling.

"Should none of your grandfather's property come to you and Basil, can you still believe in his affection?"

"Perfectly! To know he loved me, and Basil, above all, who so angered and distressed him, is enough. You know we never anticipated any remembrance. I will gladly assist my brother. I am sure there is some special work for me somewhere, so that I need be no burden to Basil and Gudule."

Hester's heart was very hopeful, her eyes very bright, and the tones of her young voice were cheery. The relief from crushing shame and anxiety had rendered all else in life easy.

"It rests alone with you, certainly," said Count Alexis, forbearing to mar her brave and tranquil mood by any reference to himself.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"CLEAR SHINING AFTER RAIN."

HESTER rose from her rocky seat on the shore, exclaiming, "Look where the clouds are breaking! Nature sympathizes in my release from dread and pain. Could any blue be lovelier than that stainless azure? The sun is pouring on me his benediction too!" as a great burst of beauteous light illumined the before somber sea and shore with an enchanting radiance.

Rustoff uttered a joyous "wouff! wouff!" at the changed atmosphere, rolling over and over on a bunch of rose geranium that had dropped from Olga's girdle. It was a perfume in which he delighted as fully as in all piny, aromatic scents of gums and eastern herbs. The Pomeranian had been unusually quiet during the conversation of his mistress' father and Miss Wilmerding.

"It is not one to be interrupted," quoth he to Olga, who did not interpret his opinion conveyed by sensitive, pointed ears and intelligent, large, dark eyes. The sympathy with human moods and interests natural to dogs was keen and alert in Rustoff; he often wondered why so few understood his own special fancies and aversions. With sweeping snowy plume carried high, dazzling, imposing ruff and dignified bearing, he bore his testimony to the seriousness of

the occasion. Hester was the only person at Bar Harbor, before Jack Bolton was received into favor, from whom Rustoff would permit any expression of amity or admiration. On first seeing her he had surveyed her critically, then deliberately walked forward and laid his pointed, black muzzle on her knee. After that token of unmistakable approval Hester might place her hand on his snowy head, while he evidently enjoyed her understanding of his character and admiration of his person.

On seeing Hester rise from the rock — the conference concluded — he no longer controlled the energy and gayety of his nature. Espying the rose-geranium leaves he sprang on them; then leaping to his feet and shaking himself into order for his return walk, trotted happily in front of Olga, while Count Alexis holding his little daughter's hand, walked by the side of Hester Wilmerding.

With elastic step, the index of a relieved and deeply grateful heart, Hester met the De Rosamberts, Miss Conway, and Nelly, as she approached the more populous portion of Bar Harbor. Her beaming glance, smiling lips, and the happy carriage of her head, all indicated a new creature. She was mutely singing a verse of Faber's her mother had believed and rejoiced in: —

> Ill that God blesses is our good,
> And unblest good is ill;
> And all is right that seems most wrong—
> If it be God's dear will.

Amazed but delighted, her four friends noted her

changed expression and bearing. Was she the girl who, pallid, nervous, and sorrowful, had so appealed to their sympathy? Gudule, who had not known the secret of Hester's agonized dejection, and yet had been frightened and pained, still rejoiced in this atmosphere of sunshine and peace.

Henri de Rosambert, mistaking, naturally, the cause of her altered demeanor, thought he saw before him two who were blessed in their mutual understanding, and would not permit himself to envy their happiness.

Miss Conway could only murmur to herself: "Bless the child! How thankful I am she is at last the Hester she must have been before Basil worried and oppressed her! But where is that graceless brother? She has doubtless learned some glad tidings, and Count Viazemski is their bearer!"

Keen-sighted but trustworthy Miss Patty! She communicated her impressions to no one, but she so spoke of Basil Wilmerding later that all believed they must have condemned him hastily and unjustly. Hester's happy face confirmed their opinion.

Excusing herself on reaching the hotel, Hester hastened to the apartments of Madame de Chavigni. One glance at her face and Constance read that the heavy burden existed no longer.

"Ah, I am so thankful for you, my dear, dearest Hester!" she cried, enfolding the girl and kissing her with a mother's tender, congratulatory sympathy.

"Yes; give thanks for and with me. I am the happiest creature in Bar Harbor! Oh, how terrible the darkness was, and what a contrast this God-given

radiancy of summer is!" and Hester burst into tears of joy and gratitude.

"I can only tell you that I am at rest concerning my dear brother."

"'At rest,'" repeated Constance. "What rare and blessed words in this storm-tossed world! Can you believe that at last I too am at rest?"

There was indeed a new light shining on the beautiful face which Hester had always beheld so pale and sad.

"After these many years of shadow, groping, torture, and rebellion to what had been decreed me, came a lifting of the gloomy clouds that had 'curtained my sky from pole to pole.' I wakened this morning with my burden gone, 'wearing the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,' with a tender, loving heart where had lain a heavy stone."

"And how?" murmured Hester, with her arm around the slender figure of the Creole lady.

"How did the blessing come to me! From God," was the low, clear, reverent answer. "He comforted and healed me in a dream of his own bestowment: I was standing by Zelma's grave, weeping; not alone for her loss, but for the awful loneliness of my life, separated from my child and husband. Real love does not weaken, Hester. To-day my dear ones are dearer than the moment they were torn from me! 'What am I to do with this love that increases; this grief that never ceases; this desolation that never lessens?' I asked myself in my dream.

"There was no answer, Hester, save in the sad,

wild cry of the lonely sea. I raised my eyes from Zelma's grave and beheld One standing before me — the divine One, thorn-crowned, hand and feet nail-marked as he had hung upon his cross of agony. In his eyes shone such an ocean of love, tenderness, and sympathy that as I gazed my spirit was bathed and healed. I fell at his feet, and his hand lay in benediction on my head. He vanished: and I rose a new creature from that touch and presence, my heart calm, resigned, peaceful. I looked back unmurmuringly on what had been; on the present and future as Christ's present and future, wherein I was to live and labor and love others for and in him — his service my solace and joy."

Hester reverently raised the hand that lay in hers and touched it with her lips; she could not speak: but there floated into her mind the picture of her friend's future: —

Wouldst thou the Holy Hill ascend
And see the Father's face?
To all his children humbly bend
And seek the lowest place.
Be like a cottage on the moor,
A covert from the wind,
With burning fire and open door,
And welcome free and kind.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

GOLDEN-ROD AND SCARLET SUMACH.

THE hotels were closed, for the season at Mount Desert was over. Mrs. Bolton, who always remained through September and October, had insisted on her friends spending their last fortnight at Bayview.

When the days were bright and mild, they lived out-of-doors; when chilly and cloudy, they gathered round great fires of glowing birch logs kindled on the broad hearth of every beautiful room.

Under the deep blue sky, in the deliciously warm September, lay the gently swaying Atlantic. The witchery of early autumn was in the air, the soft serenity that so enhances the days glowing with golden-rod and scarlet sumach and the orange, russet, and ruby tints of clustering trees. Dusky were the deep green cedars, hemlocks, and evergreens; gold the birch and larch. In the contrasted gloom and glow of the woods carpeted with tanned, fragrant pine needles, crimson vines trailed and ferns waved amber and brown. In those quiet, hazy, dreamy days the softest whisper of the wave was heard on the beach, and the fleecy clouds lying on the radiant azure seemed asleep.

The friends, so soon to part, were floated by the Sea Gull hither and thither over the tranquil sea, bidding adieu to well-loved Schooner Head, Anemone

Cave, Great Head, Thunder Cave, the shining Newport Sands, and Otter Cliffs. Slowly sailing back in brilliant moonlight doubled all the charm, renewing regrets that there were not more days and evenings to linger amid the fascinations of the lovely, noble islands, mountains, streams, lakes, forests, and the circling, ever-changing sea.

The friends went up Green and Newport mountains for a farewell view from their lofty crests, and took a last walk through Duck Brook Glen. Across the stream the boughs of golden birches interlaced; maples burned a rosy red, and moosewood royal purple. The silence, the sweetness, the sunshine that rested on this lovely lonely glen were hard to leave. When would they enjoy it together again?

A last bay drive and ocean drive; a last drive through the Gorge; a last visit to Eagle Lake and Echo Lake, where still floated the water lilies' great broad leaves, albeit the snowy flowers had vanished till another summer.

It was the last evening they were to spend at Bar Harbor. The clear moonlight and mellow air tempted Mrs. Bolton and her guests to enjoy a farewell drive and walk along the road leading to Great Head. Out above the cliff they stood, fascinated by the silvery Atlantic, the dashing breakers and the savage, silent grandeur of the mighty rock ever facing sea and sky unmoved by the giant, immeasurable force of the one, or the wildest gale that ever swept across the dread breadth of the other!

Gudule, who had heard that day from Basil, was unutterably thankful, and wistfully gazed across the moonlit sea that soon would be no barrier to the happiness of reunion.

Olga and Rustoff flitted on by Jack and Helen, the Pomeranian constantly evincing his remembrance of the friend who had delivered him from his cavern-prison on Burnt Porcupine.

Madame de Chavigni, Miss Conway, and Mrs. Bolton stood together, the face of the Creole lady most beautiful in the serenity that now illumined each perfect feature. She gazed oftener at Geoffrey and Meta than at the sea, happy in their happiness; then turned toward Hester.

Though standing between Henri de Rosambert and Count Alexis, the girl's thoughts were apparently with neither. Her gaze rested on the gleaming Atlantic or was raised to the great blue, star-sown, moon-illumined sky.

"How unwilling I was to come to Mount Desert!" she was thinking. "Yet here, in spite of much anxiety, shame, and sorrow, I have found my deepest happiness. The rest of heart I now feel in remembering Basil I never knew till the last sharp trial forced me to believe that One supreme in love and wisdom had permitted each incident; for thus alone could good be developed in spite of evil — and even through it."

"You will be content to remain at Miss Conway's, with Madame de Chavigni, till you can rejoin your brother?" asked Count Alexis when Arthur Carroll

had drawn Henri de Rosambert to another part of the cliff.

"Oh, yes! Waiting now is not what it meant two months since. Having known the worst, I have nothing to fear."

"But you might go to Basil at once."

"At once? Oh, no. My brother cannot yet afford to send for me."

"May I tell you there was one wish your grandfather cherished for your future?"

"A desire for my happiness?"

"That he thought would ensure it, if you" —

Count Alexis paused and Hester waited, misunderstanding his emotion.

"How much you loved him!" she exclaimed gratefully, fervently.

"How much I love — you! O Hester, have I hidden my heart so utterly all these months? Do you not yet know you are so dear — so precious to me that life without you has little charm? Yes; that you are to me!" he exclaimed, unconsciously speaking in his own expressive, sweet, mellow Russ.

"You grieve me — amaze me!" began Hester, and could say no more. "Oh, how ungrateful I must seem to you!" she added, after a moment's pause — "to you, to whom Basil and I owe all that was most merciful and tender in grandfather's altered feeling. You saved my brother from utter despair — perhaps self-sought death. Oh, I can never, never" —

"Think of the little I was so happy to perform as due your grandfather. I cannot ask for a response

to my feeling for you on that plea," answered Count Alexis, regarding her with honest, sorrowful eyes. "Your love to Basil must teach you that you have no love for me."

"Ah, remember what weeks and months of overwhelming anxiety and pain these at Mount Desert have been. Basil was my only thought. I never remembered myself apart from him. I felt all my life was dedicated to one aim — that of saving my dear brother. And you — not I — have saved him," she added brokenly.

"For your dear sake," was the rejoinder, in those heart-searching tones which she already felt were more swift and potent to touch her than those of any other.

But Mrs. Bolton came hastening forward, imperatively summoning her friends to return to Bayview; therefore what Count Alexis would have further said and Hester responded was reserved for another hour.

"Our last evening at Mount Desert — for how long?" asked Hester as she parted from Madame de Chavigni that night.

"We may hope, look forward to next summer; unless you are then in — Russia?"

"That is possible; but hardly probable."

"I have been looking over my past life, Hester. When I came to Mount Desert I do not believe there was a creature in its whole beautiful length and breadth so hopeless and wretched as I. You know how God willed here to deliver me. I have just found

a thought that will be helpful for all time to come — no matter what the trial. See! I have written 'Mount Desert, September 29,' against the page, to link the true, brave words with this dear island, where it pleased God to set me at liberty from my woeful sorrow: —

As soon as God's children deal with him about their captivity, under whatever grief, discipline, or anguish they may be experiencing, they become at once "the prisoners of the Lord." Saint Paul recognized no power of Rome to bind him; he was the Lord's prisoner. Joseph of old could see something more than Potiphar's hand in his imprisonment; he was at large in spirit because "the Lord was with him."

In the course of our life's journey, all of us know what it is to be prisoners — held by this, chained by that, restrained by the other thing. We are none of us what we believe we could be under more favorable circumstances. But are we prisoners of "circumstance," or of the Lord? of man or of the Lord? Whose hand do we see shutting us in? Who has the key of our prison-house? With whom do we deal about the circumstances in which we are placed? Are we looking at our life and its discipline from above — as Jeremiah did, who recognized his God in all — or are we struggling from beneath as Zedekiah did until he forced God to augment his suffering and shame to the utmost? Oh, let us believe — and hold fast this truth — that there is mercy in the seeming severity of God. His chastening — when we rebel and fret against it — becomes intolerable; but the same chastening, accepted from his wise and tender hand — irrespective of the persons or circumstances, the physical or financial condition through which it may wholly and only seem to come — changes at once the nature of the trial.

The oppression of man is then turned into the lessons of God; the weakness of the body is then an opportunity for the power of Christ to rest upon us; the thwarting of our plans becomes then a chance to surrender them all before the absolute wisdom of our unerring God — and thus the whole atmosphere of our discipline is changed, purified, exalted. It has become divine, not human; heavenly, not earthly.

Let us therefore earnestly pray never to resist God and never to ignore God in the circumstances or trials of our life that he permits. Remember that he ordained that his favored land should "lie desolate until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths; for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath to fulfill threescore and ten years." There may be a need for Sabbath-keeping, for lying fallow, in the life of some one who reads these pages. O reader, do not resist God if he lays you aside from your most loved work: if you seem to be imprisoned on every side; if suffering is your portion; if an unutterable trial is your daily companion; and if your discipline seems cruel, unnecessary, and too prolonged, yield yourself to God; consent to be his prisoner. By and by he will turn your captivity "as the streams in the south," and the chastening by which you have been disciplined and tested will work in you "the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

Madame de Chavigni closed the book with a tender smile of resignation and thankfulness. "Those words were written for me," she said. "I am the 'some one who reads these pages.' May I never forget their teaching! And now, good-night, dear Hester; and let us hope we may spend next summer — many summers — in this sweet, sweet spot, to which I shall hasten with so many grateful memories."

From the steamer gliding away from Maine the next morning the picturesque shore of Mount Desert was receding farther and farther, its mountains fading against the blue sky. Hester, the most sorrowful of the party at leaving the beautiful island, leaned silently against the side of the steamer. Would she ever see Mount Desert again? she questioned wistfully.

"When one owns a nook on that lovely shore it is

presumable he will return," said Count Alexis, who was standing by her.

"Ah, yes; but I own no nook there, or anywhere," answered Hester, with an unusual and unconquerable dejection.

"I have kept a pleasant surprise for you till now," laying in her hand a "deed of gift of Ullescliffe and all land pertaining thereto."

"Your grandfather desired you should own the beautiful cottage where he first learned to know and love you."

"Mine? Always mine? Oh, dear, dear grandfather!" cried Hester, happy, sorrowful tears clouding the farewell vision of the islands studding the sea, between which the steamer was gliding on.

"Ullescliffe is so large that I can have all my friends with me next summer. Oh, how little I dreamed this happiness was on the wing to me this morning!"

Hester's tears and smiles of grateful joy drew the little party around her to learn what was as surprising to them as it had been to her.

"You will all come? You will all like to come to me?" she asked wistfully. Eager were the promises. Gudule alone hesitated.

"Basil will then be in America," said Hester. "You will both come to me on your bridal trip. Oh, how welcome you will be!"

This amazing and charming gift from her grandfather so illumined the present and the future, that in the certainty of returning to Mount Desert to a home of her own Hester was the blithest of the party;

a joyousness softly blended with tender love and thankfulness to the dear, dear one who had so thoughtfully, sweetly remembered her, and her attachment to Ullescliffe's beauty and many memories connected with her mother's father.

Rustoff was leaping against her knee, seeking to express his sympathy with her unknown but evident pleasure.

"You too shall come, Rustoff!" stroking his snowy head. "Without your 'wouff! wouff!' and engaging ways, Mount Desert would lack one charm — you loyal beauty!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FINIS.

IN January the six months appointed by Mr. Harcourt expired. The air of New York was clear and bracing, the sky brilliantly blue. A light fall of snow was fast disappearing in the warmth of the genial sun.

Hester, who, with Madame de Chavigni, had passed the months since leaving Mount Desert with Miss Conway, was awaiting the arrival of her brother, Count Alexis, and Olga, on that day's steamer. But not only did Basil, Count Alexis, Olga, and Rustoff appear, but Basil's bride, Gudule, to whom he had been wedded in Paris on his way home from St. Petersburg.

This was his joyful surprise for Hester, and the girl embraced her sister most tenderly and delightedly.

Henri de Rosambert was to come over in July for rest from his unremitting work in France, and once more, with Arthur Carroll, the friends were all to meet that summer at their beloved and beautiful Mount Desert.

The next morning the solemn firm of Boultby & Cassiton awaited the entrance of Hester, Basil and his wife, and Count Viazemski, to read the will of their late honorable client — John Merrick Harcourt,

deceased; also, in advance, to present to Miss Wilmerding a note forwarded to them last summer, to be delivered before the reading of her late grandfather's will.

The long-unseen and familiar handwriting touched Hester almost as keenly as a sudden glimpse of his face or the clasp of his hand.

The note was most affectionate, saying she had won so deep a place in his love that he, thinking she might not know this, was fain to tell her and give her his warmest blessing and prayers for her lifelong happiness. What more he had to convey as proof of his love his last will would reveal to her.

With the exception of one third of the property willed to Basil, all her grandfather's large possessions were bequeathed to Hester.

Basil, who had expected no token of undeserved amity and had only appeared because he was legally summoned, first flushed, then became so pallid that Gudule sprang up for water and restoratives.

"No! no!" he murmured. "It is the remembrance — the forgiveness — the blotting out of what had made me too, too unworthy!"

Gudule, who did not understand the sentence, only partially heard, was at a loss to comprehend the undisguised emotion of her husband; but Hester clasped his hand, learning in those few words that her most earnest, ceaseless prayer for her brother had been answered.

Once more at Mount Desert, where the ocean was

reflecting the azure of the sky. All the well-remembered marvel and beauty of its varied scenery were enjoyed again on that summer's program of enjoyment, as Hester with Madame de Chavigni awaited her promised guests at Ullescliffe cottage. It had been enlarged by a wing of noble proportions, containing five spacious apartments graced by bay and oriel windows. Its wide veranda met the piazza of the original picturesque residence, and, with its awning and commodious seats, commanded portions of the exquisite view of sea, islands, mountains, and shore. Hester was well-pleased with her lovely home, so soon to contain all she desired, when her dear friends should at last be gathered around her.

Her twenty-second birthday was celebrated during their visit.

Basil, standing in one of the large bay windows of the library by his sister's special table, was examining with much interest her many gifts, characteristic of each friend who had eagerly sought to gratify some taste or wish of their youthful hostess.

Olga's offering was a rare and delicate necklace of moonstones, with a card on which was inscribed: —

FROM RUSTOFF AND MISS HESTER'S LOVING LITTLE "MOONFLOWER":

In remembrance of the evening on Green Mountain last summer.

Basil deciphered the inscription with an answering and most painful thrill of memory. That evening was the beginning of his real awakening to the true meaning and possible dark results of his reckless deed.

From what had not his grandfather's forbearance saved him! He could not dwell on the wrecked life, the dishonored name, the enduring shame that would have been his portion, without a repentance and gratitude that each day widened and deepened. The ancient law that what one sowed one always reaped had been justified in his own mental suffering; but most mercifully, undeservedly, had he been shielded from the betrayal of his sowing to a curious, unsympathetic public. To a forbearance and forgiveness higher than his grandfather's, Basil's penitence, gratitude, and reverence were due; and his life — unknown to all — was an offering to that remembrance. Having settled on Gudule, and the children which might be given her, the wealth bequeathed him by his grandfather, he labored day after day and month after month, with ceaseless effort and self-denial, to realize a certain amount for a purpose he revealed to no one. Long ere it was accomplished, his beloved and loyal sister had gone to Russia as the happy wife of Alexis Viazemski, and the devoted mother-sister of the delighted little "moonflower." Rustoff, no less enchanted, claimed her as "one of the family," giving an obedience and attachment unquestioning and fervent.

The next year Helen Armitage, as the wife of Henri de Rosambert, was an absorbed and joyous worker in Paris, assisting her husband in his every labor of love and winning many of the hearts of the poor of the great city by her ready sympathy and wise, gentle counsels in their hours of need.

Geoffrey Hatton and Meta were most earnestly welcomed in the two homes in Paris and Saint Petersburg. With Miss Conway and Madame de Chavigni, the friends expect to be reunited next summer at Mount Desert. Neither Hester nor Count Alexis could relinquish Ullescliffe to strangers.

It was on Hester's last visit that Basil revealed the cherished purpose of his life. His unremitting labor was painfully visible in face and form, yet his countenance was so peaceful and his voice such an index of a heart at rest that Hester could not remonstrate. He had accepted no assistance even from his sister; nor had he used the slightest fraction of his grandfather's bequest to advance his arduous undertaking. Once, when strength seemed failing, he had accepted an unexpected gift from a distant cousin as a token of divine approbation and immediately consecrated it to his work.

"I sinned and I must atone. I can not, dare not offer what costs me nothing, Hester. It is my thanksgiving to God for forgiveness and concealment of my crime from the world's knowledge and justly merited condemnation. I am now almost ready to build a home and chapel for criminals who have served their term of imprisonment. Broken in health as many are, or frowned upon and distrusted for their past, numbers find it almost impossible to obtain situations among the upright of their day and generation. They know not where to turn during the agonizing, overwhelming space that intervenes. The home will shelter them; and the teachings of a chaplain, 'mer-

ciful and faithful,' and 'who can have compassion on those who are out of the way,' will save many and many a poor fellow — *my brothers* — from despair or worse. May God bless and help them as he has forgiven, blessed, and helped me to thus remember and atone! for to his blessing I owe the wish, will, and power to have won the requisite means for the undertaking."

"God will give you your heart's desire, my dear, dear Basil!" cried Hester, her arms around his neck, her voice broken with emotion, and her whole heart thrilling with joy and thanksgiving that at last she could honor, as she had longed to honor, her only brother.

We read a legend of a monk who painted
In an old convent cell in days bygone —
Pictures of martyrs and of virgins sainted,
And the sweet-faced Christ with crown of thorn.

"Poor daubs — not fit to be a chapel's treasure!"
Full many a taunting word upon them fell;
But the good abbot let him for his pleasure
Adorn with them his solitary cell.

One night the poor monk mused, "Could I but render
Honor to Christ as other painters do,
Were but my skill as great as is the tender
Love that inspires me when his cross I view!

But no; 'tis vain I toil and strive in sorrow;
What man so scorns still less can He admire;
My life's work is all valueless; to-morrow
I'll cast my ill-wrought pictures in the fire."

He raised his eyes within his cell — oh, wonder!
There stood a Visitor, thorn-crowned was he,
And his sweet voice the silence rent asunder —
"I'll scorn no work that's done for love of me."

Around the walls the paintings shone resplendent
With lights and colors to this world unknown;
A perfect beauty and a hue transcendent
That never yet on mortal canvas shone.

There is a meaning in this strange old story—
Let none dare judge his brother's worth or need;
The pure intent gives to the act its glory—
The noblest purpose makes the noblest deed.